The Fool's Mirror of History

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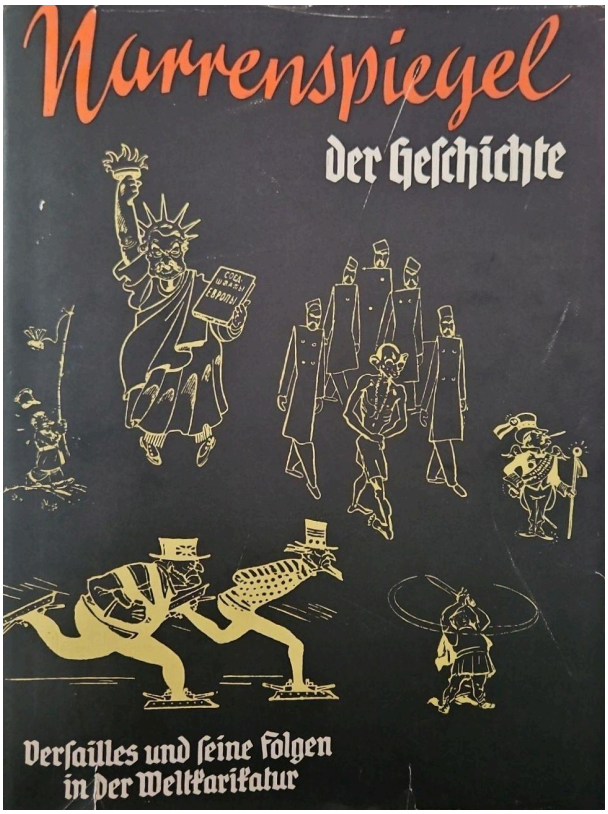
Versailles and its Consequences in Caricature

Compiled from the archives of the National-Zeitung Essen



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Caricatures not only from the German press, but from newspapers and magazines all over the world, have been brought together here to create an amusing yet thought-provoking showcase. The sketches and drawings of the world's caricaturists reflect the events of post-war politics, and sometimes a fleeting caricature says more than ten editorials; a firework display of witty ideas and quick-witted humor is ignited with a single spark. It is also interesting to study the diversity of humor in the individual nations represented by their most famous press cartoonists.

Caricature is always an attack and an exposure. Here the peacemakers, the chatterboxes of Geneva, the political ideologues, the unteachable and unconvertible as well as the "honorable" political merchants and negotiators are shown for what they are, not what they would like to appear. It is like a revelation of common sense against the hypocritical phrases that are printed day after day through certain pens of the foreign press.

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Preface

The caricature is an old political weapon. “Ridicule kills” has long been said. The mockery of satire and caricature has conquered many a vice, and even nations can laugh themselves to health.
The following pages are intended to guide the reader through the world events of our time in an enjoyable way. If we may hope to give him an amusing history lesson, let him not forget that he is told serious things, in a smiling way, about how the world has failed to create true peace; how the Dictate of Versailles has brought the world only that “peace” which, according to Goethe, the bird of prey wants in order to eat its prey in peace; how the nations are faced with a terrible world danger; how the order of states is threatened everywhere and how susceptible large parts of the world are to anarchy. One will ask oneself, after looking at the following pages with amusement, whether some nations would not do better to put their own house in order instead of lecturing the German people on their new ways of true political life.

German matters have only been touched on in the book; they are mentioned indirectly when it comes to the Versailles system and the end of Versailles. Foreign caricatures have also been used on purpose; their people should speak with their own voice. Care has also been taken to include caricatures that are peculiar and characteristic of the individual nations; looking at the caricatures of the nations in their national characteristics has its own appeal. The English caricature, for example, is characterized by humor. It is seldom hurtful; even the person concerned can laugh along, if only he has a “sense of humor”. French caricature, on the other hand, is characterized by the esprit of the French nation. Its essence is not humor, but wit and often sharp, caustic wit. French caricature is much more often scathing than English caricature, and it does not grow out of a sporting rivalry, but often out of absolute enmity. Soviet Russian caricature is similar to French caricature in its graphic style, except that it uses poison. It is vulgar - spiteful and obscene - mean. Italian caricature, on the other hand, has a strong tendency towards pathos and symbolism, while American caricature is as diverse in character as the American nation itself.
We have not only collected the caricatures, but have also organized them and combined them into a whole with interspersed texts. We hope that you will be able to browse through the following pages a little like a history of the time.

In the following chapters, the reader is confronted with fateful questions of our time, current struggles and problems pass by with the images we have brought together here. The collection has fulfilled its purpose if it helps in a friendly way to understand the present and the seriousness of those problems.

Upheaval and New Construction in the International Order

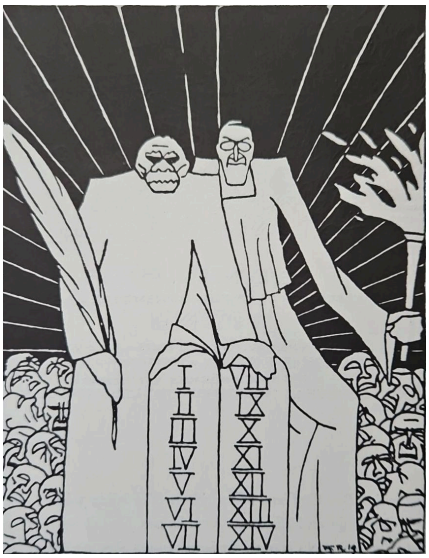
1. The European Order - The Oppression and Rise of Germany

The Treaty of Versailles as the Promise of a New World Order

“The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.”

- **From “Hellas” by Shelley, quoted by Lord [George] Curzon at the announcement of the armistice in the House of Lords.**

The Treaty of Versailles is unique in world history with its claim to be the beginning of a new world order. The Entente had presented the World War as a crusade for international freedom and peace; the evil forces of militarism were to be eradicated through the “war to end war”; that was the charges against the Central Powers. According to [Woodrow] Wilson's memorable statement, the world should “become safe for democracy”; the Treaty of Versailles thus also became the birth certificate of a “League of Nations”. The Anglo-Saxons refer to its statutes with the biblical term “covenant”. The aim of the covenant was to create “international relations based on justice and honor”, to establish international law as a guideline for the actions of governments and to “let justice prevail”. The Treaty of Versailles was intended to be, in a word, the peoples' certificate of freedom and the law of a new world order.

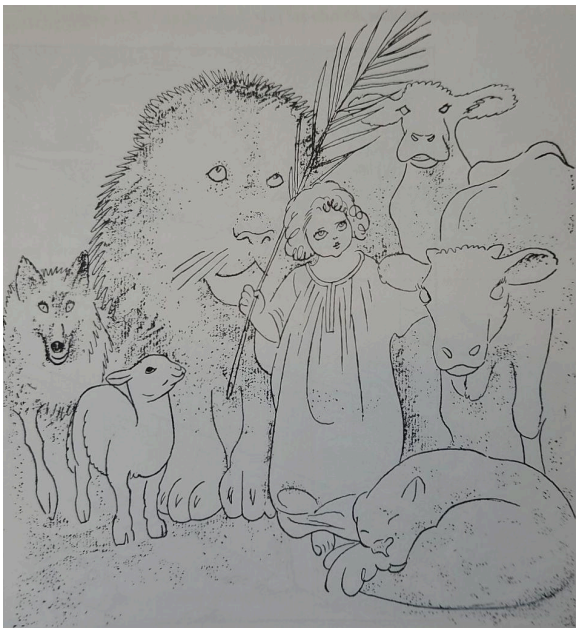


(1)

The peacemakers of Versailles - Wilson as the prophet and Clemnceau as the sword of the crusade of democracy - seemed to bring new tablets to the earth, the palm branch of peace and the light of a new age.

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE JOURNALISTES ACCRÉDITÉS AUPRÈS DE LA S.D.N.
DÉJEUNER DE LA PRESSE
A L'OCCASION DE LA XII. ASSEMBLÉE DE LA S.D.N.
MENU
Hors d'oeuvre de Kopaay FILETS de SOLE du JOURDAIN
FAISAN DE CHASSE DU LIBAN « POMMES MIGNONNETTES » SALADE
« FROMAGES » PÊCHES DE L'ÉDEN «
GENÈVE LE 14. SEPTEMBRE 1933. LES BERGUES.
(2)

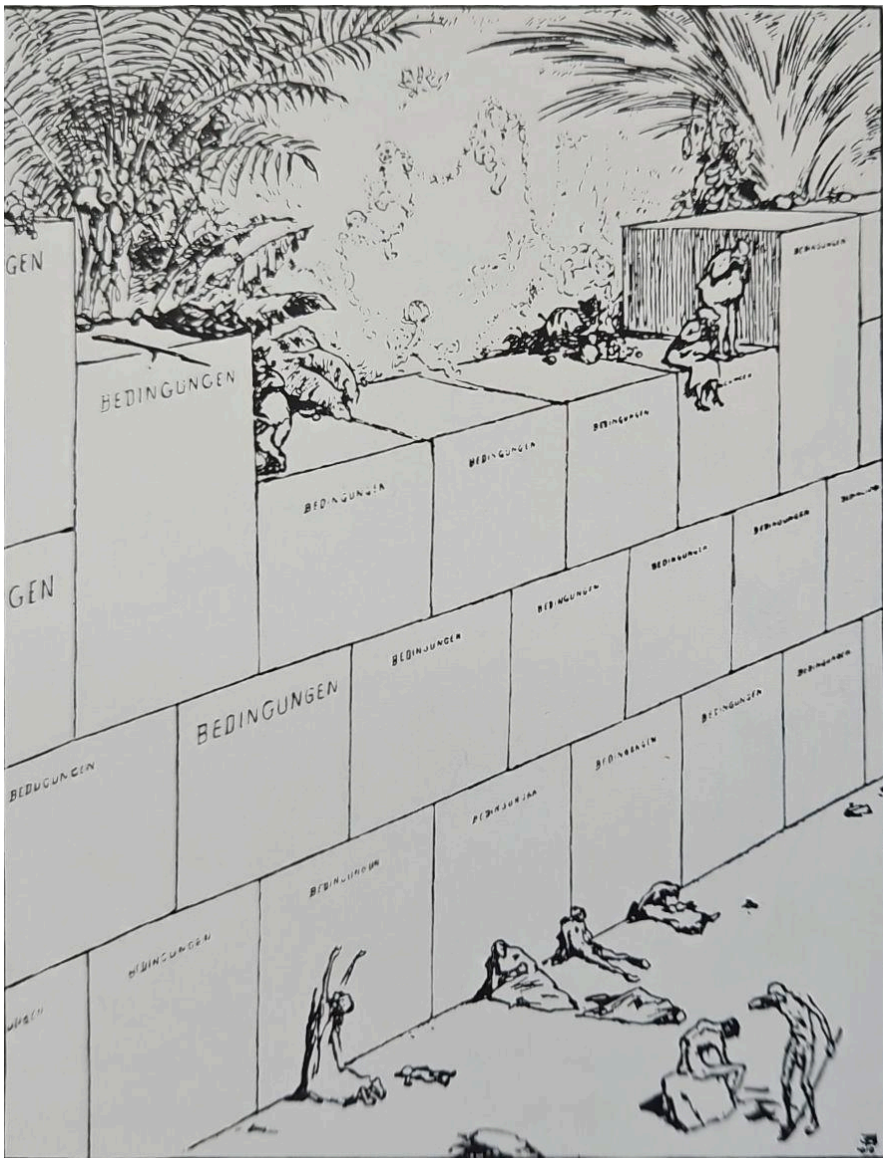
From the holy mountain of Geneva, the view of the promised land opened up; [Aristide] Briand, who after Wilson had become the great herald of the League of Nations, led the pilgrimage, as can be seen on the table card for a not too bad banquet of the International Press Association.


(3)

And there should be freedom on earth.

“What have you done to Europe!”

- [Frank A.] Vanderlip [American journalist and banker, co-founder of the Federal Reserve]

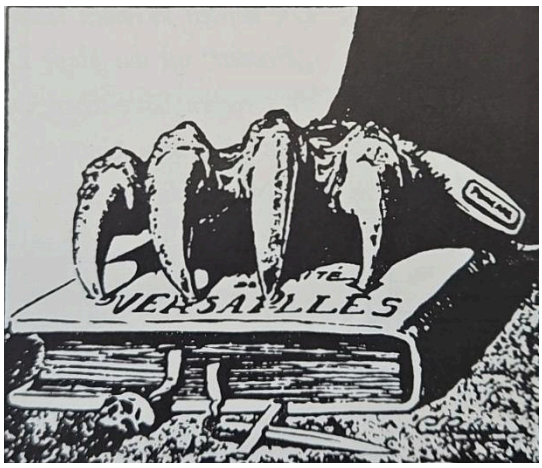


(4)

No peace has been made with greater promises. No peace has created less peace. All its promises revealed themselves more and more as a deceptive mirage.

The German Reich Under the “Peace”

Peace, which promised to establish a new world order, turned out to be a tool of war and destruction for Germany. “Peace” was not least the work of George Clemenceau. In French domestic politics, Clemenceau had earned himself the nickname “the Tiger”. As “the Tiger”, he had also created the Treaty of Versailles. He once said that twenty million Germans were too many. The treaty seemed designed to correct this mistake.



(5)

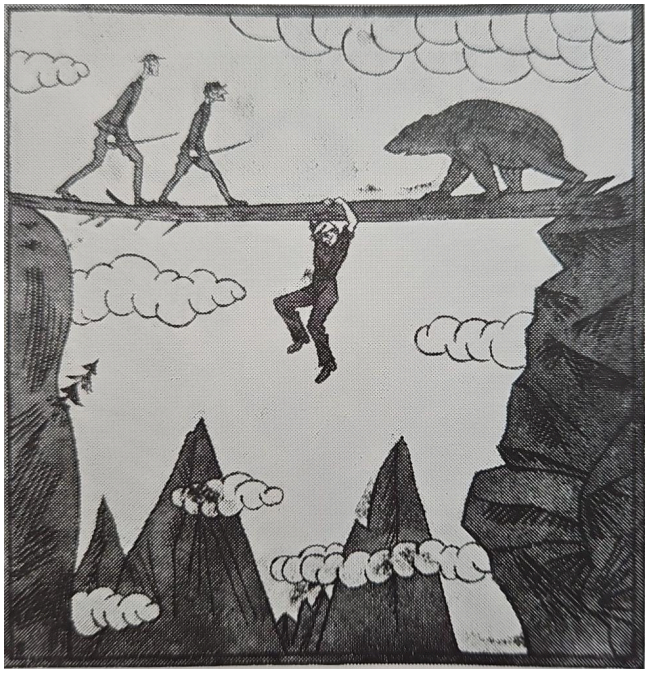
The Treaty of Versailles fell on Europe like the claw of the tiger.

(6)

This is how the French themselves see the Treaty of Versailles: The tiger tears the German eagle apart.

(7)

The claw of the treaty struck the deepest wounds in the German people, who often struggled to maintain their mere existence in "peace". To speak of Germany's "situation" already had a derisive undertone, as the adjacent drawing by an American shows. It was the "situation" of despair, of danger, of need, into which the "treaty" brought Germany.


(8)

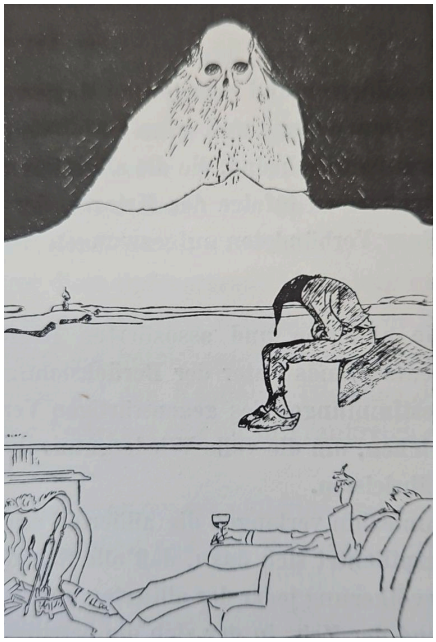
A strange bridge of understanding is built.

(9)

The peace rested on Germany, so that it almost collapsed under it.

(10)

Separatist activities on the Rhine and in Bavaria were encouraged: According to Werner Hamann, France's heart's desire was to replace the barbaric Bavarian "Gemülichkeit" [German-specific phrase for charity and goodwill] with French civilization.


(11)

There was peace, and yet the armies were marching. In the spring of 1923, French troops invaded the Ruhr region and cut it off from Germany because 200,000 telegraph poles had not been delivered. The winter brought cold for the Germans and coal for the French.

(12)

In numerous tribute conferences, the Allies were at work "resurrecting" Germany.

The Reparations

§231
of the Treaty of Versailles

The Allied and Associated Governments declare, and Germany recognizes, that Germany and her Allies are responsible as authors for all loss and damage sustained by the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals as a result of the war forced upon them by the aggression of Germany and her Allies.

§232

The Allied and Associated Governments recognize that the resources of Germany, taking into account their permanent diminution resulting from the other provisions of the present Treaty, are not sufficient to ensure full reparation for all such losses and damages.

Appendix I

According to Article 232 above, compensation can be claimed from Germany for any damage falling under one of the following categories:

1. Damage, wherever caused, to the person or life of civilians and their dependents by any act of war, including bombardments and other land, sea and air attacks, as well as by the direct consequences of such acts of war or the consequences of any war operations of the two belligerent groups.
2. Damage inflicted, wherever caused, by Germany or its allies on civilians or their dependants. This also includes injury to life or health as a result of imprisonment, deportation, internment, deportation, abandonment at sea and forced labor.
3. Damage caused by Germany and its allies on its own territory or on occupied and war-torn territory to civilians or their dependent survivors through injury to health, capacity to work or honor.
4. Damages from any kind of poor treatment of prisoners of war.
5. As damage caused to the peoples of the Allied and Associated Powers, all pensions and similar allowances to military victims of war (land, naval and air forces), the maimed, wounded, sick or disabled and to persons whose breadwinners were these victims. The amount of these sums due to the Allied and Associated Governments shall be the capitalized value of the said pensions and allowances for each of these governments. The conversion to the capitalized value shall be based on the date of entry into force of the present Treaty and the rates enforced in France at that date.
6. The cost of assistance provided by the governments of the Allied and Associated Powers to prisoners of war, their families and the persons of whom they were the breadwinners.
7. The allowance payable by the Governments of the Allied and Associated Powers to the families of those mobilized and of all those serving in the army, and to their dependants; the amount of the sums due to them for each year of the duration of hostilities shall be calculated for each of the said Governments on the basis of the average rate enforced in France for payments of this kind in the year in question.
8. Damage inflicted on civilians by Germany or its allies through conscription for labor without adequate compensation.
9. Damage to all property, wherever situated, belonging to any of the Allied and Associated Powers or their nationals (except army and navy installations) which has been removed, confiscated,

damaged or destroyed by the action of Germany or its Allies on land, sea or air, or damage resulting directly from hostilities or any acts of war.

10. Damage inflicted on the civilian population in the form of impositions, fines or similar recoveries by Germany or its allies.

etc. etc.

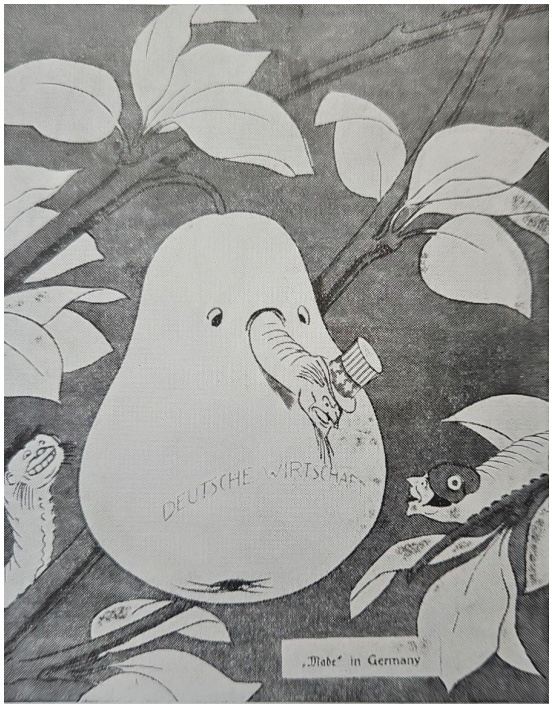
When the Allies calculated the “damage” of the world war, the damage of the most terrible war in world history, for which they blamed the Central Powers as the “authors”, they came up with figures that only astronomers were used to. Slowly, from one of the countless reparations conferences to the next, the figures sank and at least approached the tangible, without the burden losing any of its dreadfulness. Generations of Germans wanted to be burdened with the debt obligations. People whose fathers had not even been born when the “damage” for which they were to be held responsible was caused would still have had to pay the debt.

(13)

Germany's path through life seemed like a path of senseless, exhausting labor between bayonets.

(14)

Germany also seemed to “pay”. And once again, people thought it would “work” in the long run. What happened, however, was that Germany burdened itself with debt after debt in order to pay, thus transforming reparation debt into so-called private debt. When Germany “went shopping”, i.e. got hold of money, as shown in the picture above, the creditors took to its heels and the reparations obligations ate everything up again.



(15)

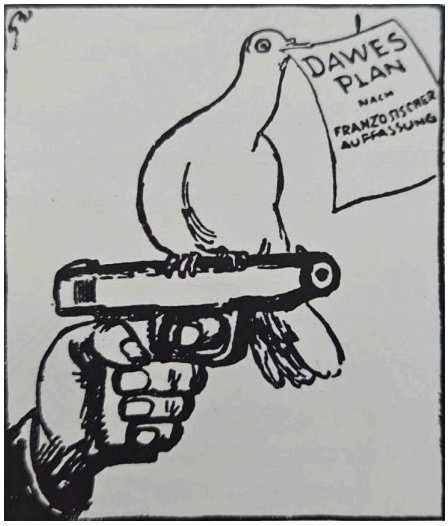
As a result, the German economy began to suffer from internal emaciation and to become subservient to thousands of foreign influences.

(16)

No wonder the hen that laid the golden eggs learned about contraceptives.

(17)

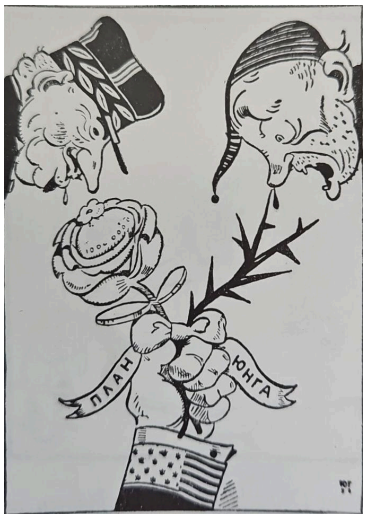
Finally it was realized that the immense, devastating burden on Germany would destroy all hopes of the slightest payments, and Lloyd George told Briand that it would be better if the German packhorse at least touched the earth.



(18)

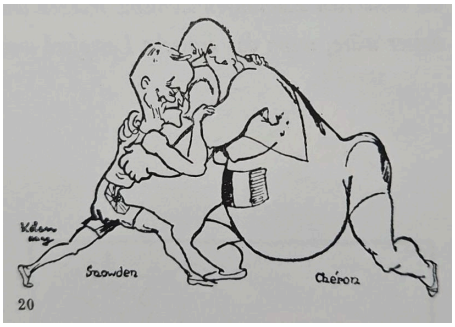
After the end of the French Ruhr adventure, a commission of experts was set up, whose deliberations resulted in the Dawes Plan, named after its chairman. The Dawes Plan carried out the "regulation" of Germany's burdens and endeavored to eradicate the violent methods of collection. But the plan required Germany to make 2 1/2 million annual payments in a "normal year". It transferred the German railroad to a corporation (Aktiengesellschaft) [a German specific word, similar to a public limited or joint-stock company]. The draftsman was therefore able to depict the plan as a dove of peace on the barrel of a revolver.

Young-Plan



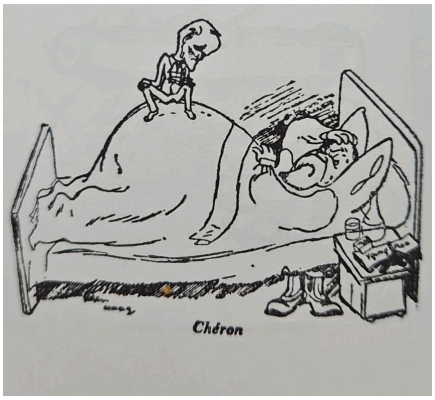
(19)

The Dawes Plan shared the fate of its predecessors: its "inapplicability" became obvious to everyone after a while.
It was replaced by the Young Plan.
Like every stage on the difficult path of German tribute, it was a "relief" that left too much of the unbearable behind. The plan provided for Germany's debt payments until 1988; it too was a flower that had a fragrance for the French and thorns for the Germans.



(20)

The Allies fought passionately and bitterly for what was wrested from Germany. At the conference in The Hague, where the Young Agreement was negotiated, the plan almost failed because of the fight over the spoils. The tough, lean socialist [Philip] Snowden, then British Chancellor of the Exchequer, fought doggedly with the somewhat corpulent French Finance Minister [Henry] Chéron for England's share of the tribute. His "ridiculous and grotesque" description of a French offer became famous for its frankness, which was unusual in official negotiations. He interpreted the Internationale's "the last fight let us face!" as a call to fight for the demands of his own fatherland.

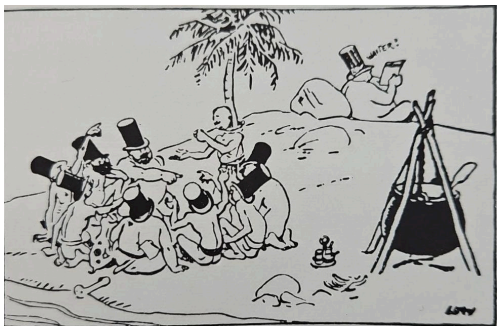


(21)

For the French finance minister, his stubborn, tenacious demand may have been a nightmare.

(22)

While the German finance minister [Rudolf] Hilferding, as a solemn waiter, serves the capon [chicken] to the guests, they have already fallen out over the lion's share.


(23)

In quiet moments, the creditors of the reparations gave each other lectures on the godliness of fasting, since the prisoner was not fat enough to satisfy everyone. The American, however, to whom the reparations payments mostly flowed, sat in the background, studied the menu and shouted for the waiter.

The Policy of Mutual Understanding

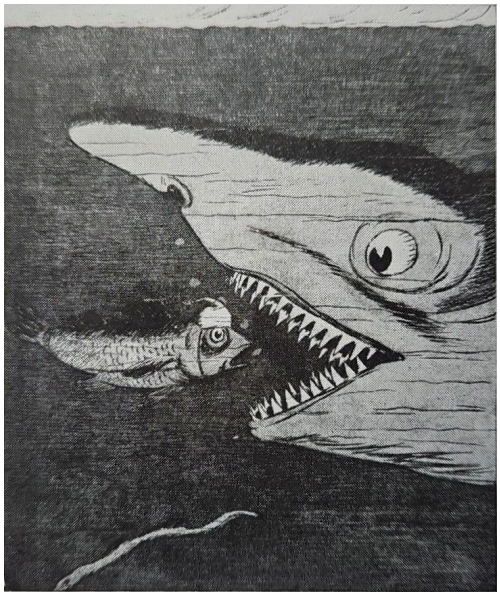
"We are told that Germany has lost sympathizers. Who is telling you that they were sympathizers?"
Adolf Hitler

In the post-war period, there was a policy that called itself "the policy of understanding", and branded any other policy as hostile to peace. This policy amounted to demanding compliance, even servility, from Germany in the name of understanding and peace among nations. Germany was considered peace-loving only to the extent that it complied. Its powerlessness appeared as a guarantee of peace. In Germany, it was said that this policy of concession was intended to win "sympathy" in the world. However, this sympathy was suspiciously mixed with the goodwill that one has everywhere for easy-going and compliant partners. The weak in the world always have a certain amount of sympathy, just as the strong, who assert themselves, have a certain amount of unpopularity.

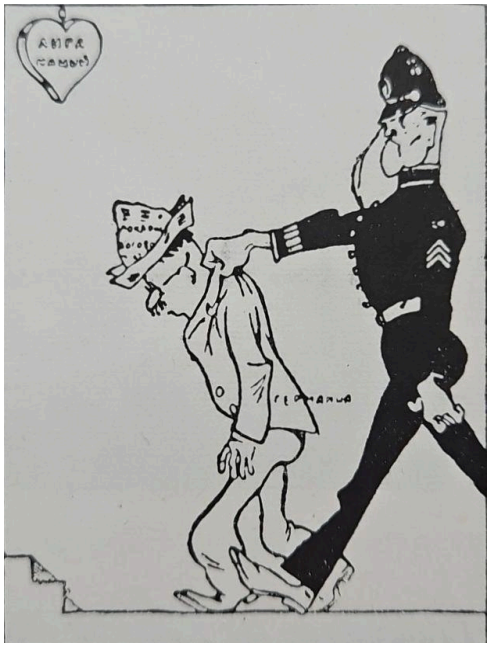
This policy of yielding the monopoly of the policy of peace to no one did no service to Germany or to anyone. Never has the idea of peace as such been more imperiled than when it was degraded to the level of a bait and a trap for the vanquished,-

(24)

…as the dove of peace was to be the bait for the German eagle.

 (25)

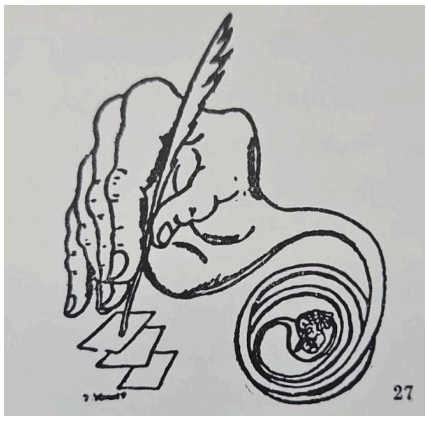
The policy of reconciliation reached its high point when Germany was admitted to the League of Nations. Germany seemed to be re-entering the community of nations as a state with equal rights; but these rights were false. For Germany was still not master in its own territory, still lacked military sovereignty. The League had only bought the appearance of true equality. Only when Germany had attained full and genuine equality could she have become a member of a "league of nations" without betraying herself or the Confederation. Until then, her entry into the League of Nations was like a little fish jumping into the jaws of a shark.

 (26)

The recording of Germany's entry into the League of Nations.

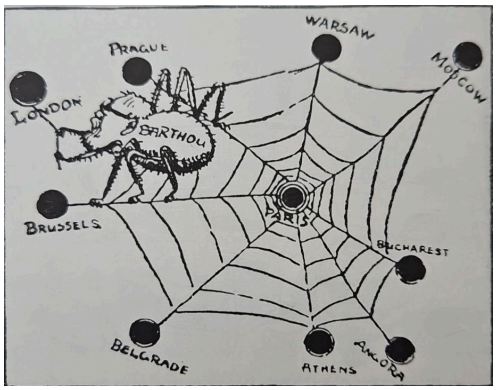
The "Security" and the Pacts

The policy of understanding was joined by the "policy of security". Like the policy of fulfillment, this too was to become the touchstone of the will for peace among nations. Peace – and its main symbol disarmament – should set in when "security" has been established for all through a network of mutual assistance obligations and support treaties. The pacts that were made, however, were no different from alliances, except for the greater hypocrisy. The collective peace quickly turned into collective preparations for war.



(27)

Pact followed by pact. The French illustrator shows how the French statesman (drawn with the face of Briand) becomes a cramped hand signing a pact, with everything else attached to it like a vestigial appendage.

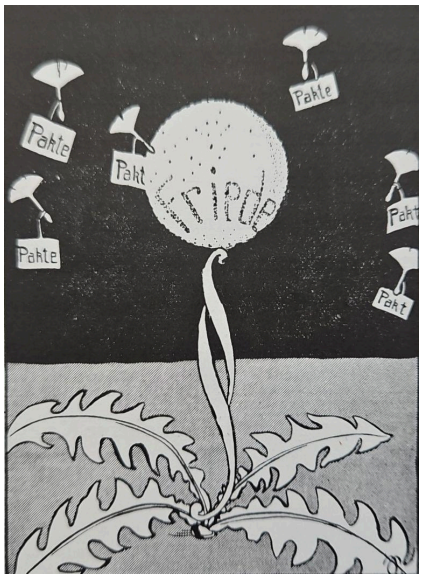


(28)

The pact system reached its zenith under Louis Barthou [French Minister of Foreign Affairs], who prepared the Franco-Soviet Pact. The system of pact politics was supposed to envelop Europe like an inescapable net.

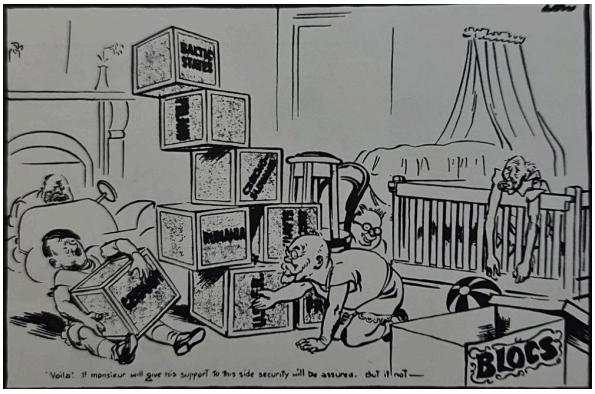
"Peace", as they understood it, feared for its security, and the security system was of the same spirit as the Treaty of Versailles from which it sprang.

The security system was supposed to be a complicated mechanism. It was said to consist of rings, concentric circles of states linked by support and guarantee pacts. The system was as elaborate as it was fragile, like a large house of cards.



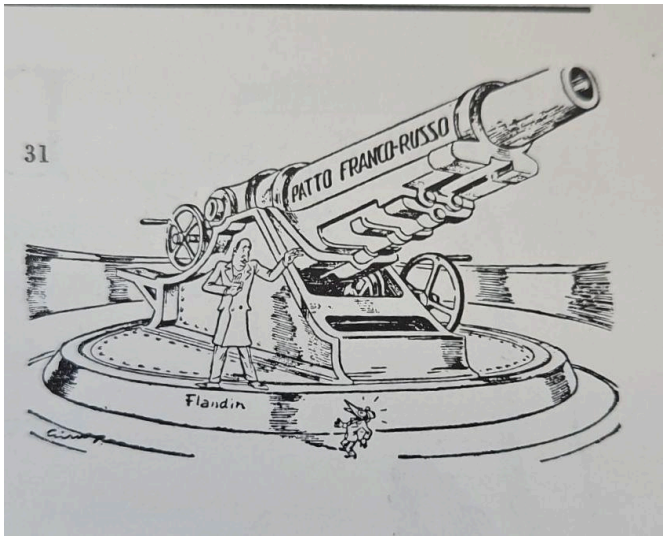
(29)

A breath of wind blows away the threads of the miracle flower called "peace".



(30)

"Collective security" seems to be a game with a construction kit. Germany is called upon to support the shaky construction. Litvinov is lurking, Mussolini is biding his time; Sir John Simon is apathetic.



(31)

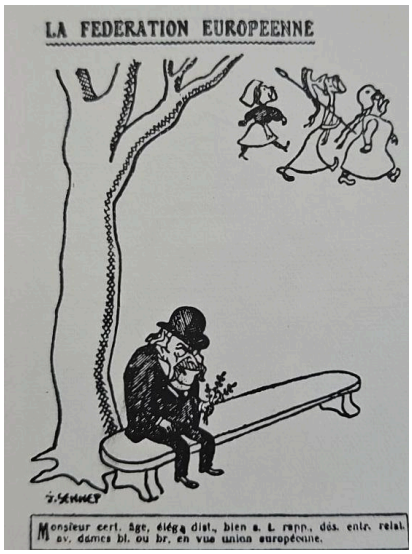
The security system was born of mistrust: dark suspicions surrounded all the pact consultations. When one says security, one always asks the question: security from whom? Every security system constructs the future "aggressor" against whom it directs its attack. The whole system, as already mentioned, has not been realized, nor has it even been properly tried. What remained were the partial pacts, which were simply "blocks" of powers. Thus the system of security policy finally revealed itself as a great war machine, a traveling cannon that was supposedly loaded with doves of peace.

(32)

France perceived the "support" of the pact system as an enormous foreign legion for its protection. The English illustrator has Briand say: "France loves peace! Oui! But France must take care of its security! It is reasonable. And it will change its program if the conference, for its part, wants to enlist in the foreign legion! Voilà!"

The Crowning Achievement of the Security System: “Paneuropa”

The crowning of the collective system should, according to the ideal of its most daring supporters, form a pan-European system, a kind of United States of Europe. Aristide Briand has emerged as the main champion of this idea.


LA FEDERATION EUROPEENNE
Monsieur certain âge, dégagé dist., bien a. l. rapp., dés. entr. relat. av. dames bl. ou br. en vue union européenne.
(33)

“Mr. middle-aged, elegant, distinguished appearance, employed in a position of responsibility, seeks acquaintance with a lady, blonde or dark, for the purpose of a European marriage.”

(34)

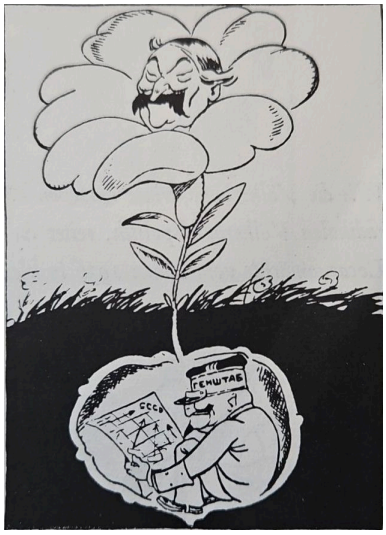
Soviet Russian caricature, in particular, attacked Briand's Pan-European Plan with grim determination and hatred. It is good to show once again today what the “collective system” once looked like in the mirror of Soviet Russian caricature.

(35)

Briand sees himself in a dream as president of the United States of Europe; and yet he stands on the pedestal of French militarism.

(36)

The Pan-European project is only a veil behind which Briand shamefacedly conceals France's quest for world power.



(37)

The project was defamed as a general staff plan against Soviet Russia until a way was discovered to make the security system subservient to the general staff's own plans.

(38)

The proud image of a United States of Europe, as it appears in the answers of Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Denmark, Sweden and Greece.

The Other Side of Europe: the League of Nations Army

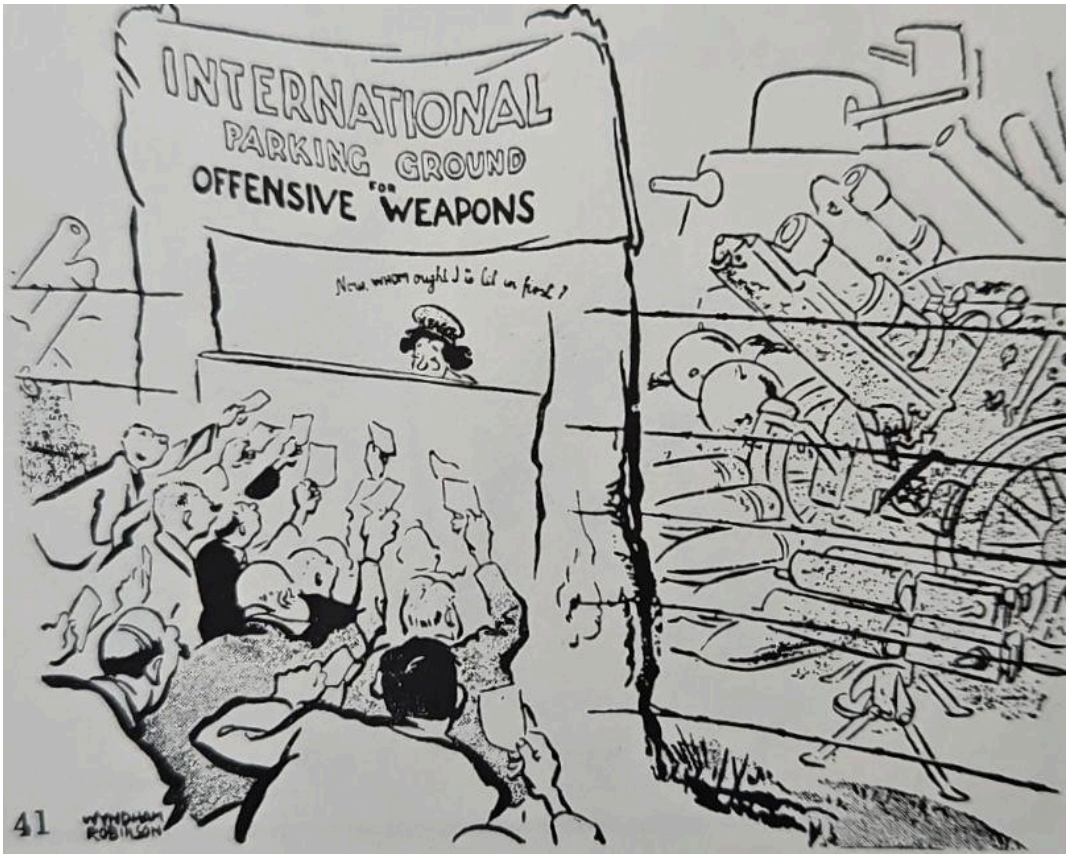
The plan of the European Union has two faces, like the god Janus: the martial face of pan-Europe is the League of Nations army, which, according to the wishes of some of its fanatical supporters in the Geneva League, is to be given as an “executive arm”.

(39)

What the League of Nations army might look like: Lord Cecil, one of the most ardent supporters of a radical League of Nations policy, rides along the front of the League of Nations army, as already envisaged on a smaller scale in the memorandum of the Locarno Powers of March 1936.

(40)

Who should command the League of Nations army? The most prominent pacifists in England are competing for the post of supreme commander, alongside the fire brigade commander of Golders Green (a small suburb of London).
“Position vacant. Warlord wanted: Excellent wages, uniform provided, good outings, use of car. APPLY WITHIN.”

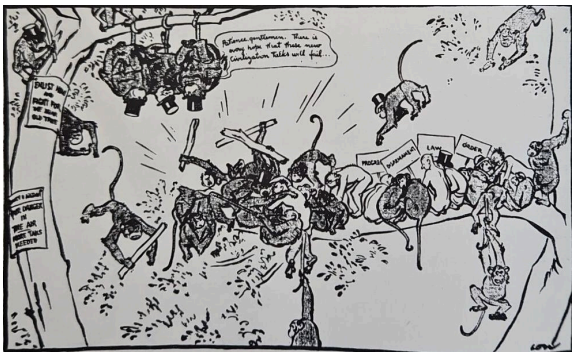


(41)

Then the essential question arises: whom should the League of Nations army serve? Everyone pounces on the "arsenal" of the League of Nations when real antagonisms arise. To whom should the guard hand over the weapons first? Where is the superior authority that could be made the master of history by gaining control of the weapons of the world?

And the Result of the Fight for Security?

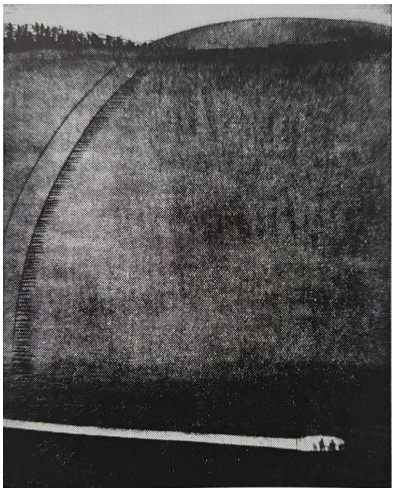
The mania for security is born of mistrust: every grand, comprehensive security plan raises the question: security from whom?, and at its root there is always suspicion.


(42)

The result of the mistrust bred by the security psychosis is a jungle in which everyone fights against everyone.

(43)

The result is that Europe is sitting on bayonets today.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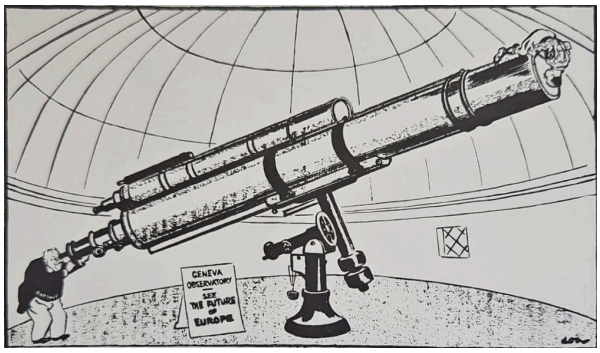
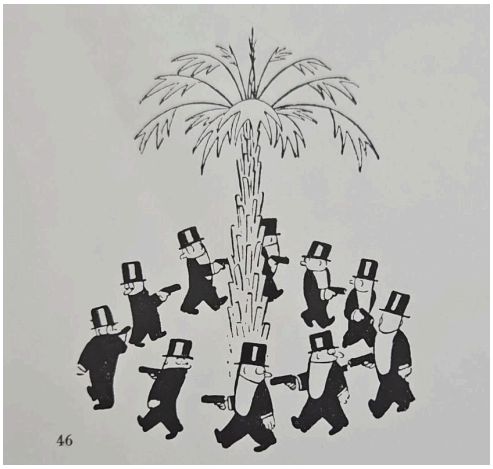
And France has made a name for itself like a mole.



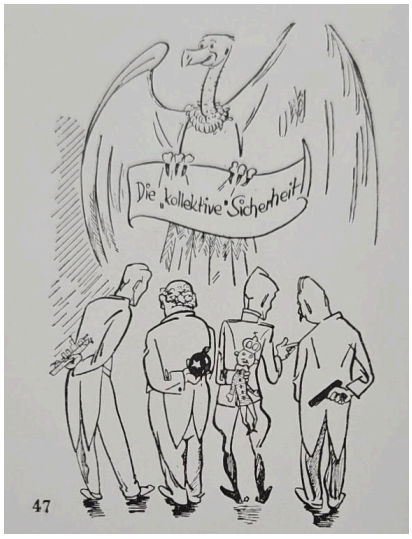
(45)

The result is alienation between peoples who seek each other out in close proximity, as from planet to planet-,



(46)

The result is that collective security is a game of tag among people who hold the revolver to each other's backs-,



(47)

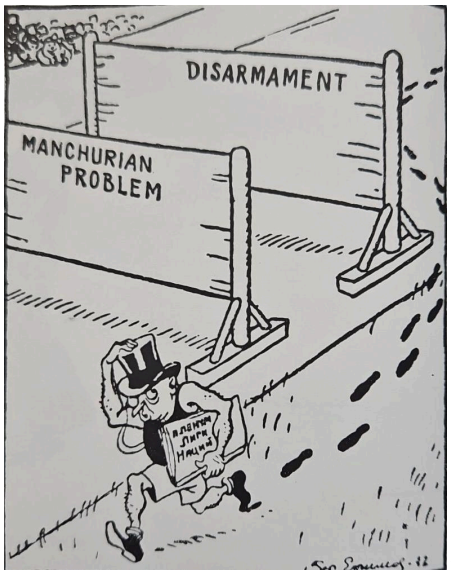
and everyone has a weapon against the other, be it a pistol, or a bomb, or a puppet on a string, ready to go-,

(48)

and Europe hungers for peace - for "some fish and potatoes" - while the waiter makes magnificent preparations for the banquet and eagerly calls out: "I'm coming, sir, I'm coming!"

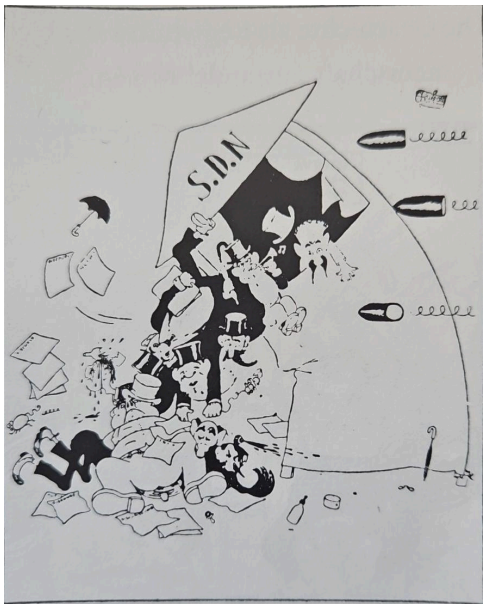
The League of Nations

It was also difficult not to write satire about the League of Nations. It seemed to have invented a radical cure for all the world's ills: the appointment of a commission. When the earth moved, “he came,” according to an English newspaper, “saw and adjourned” or passed a resolution.



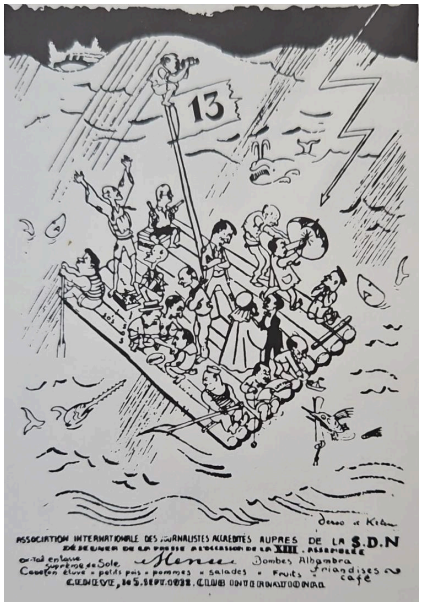
(49)

The League of Nations avoided the hurdles by running past them at double time.



(50)

They quarreled when the shells hissed.

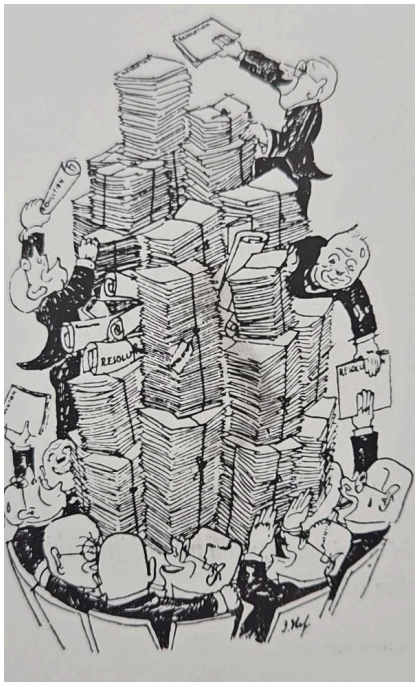

13
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES JOURNALISTES ACCREDITES AUPRES DE LA S.D.N
DEJEUNER DE LA PRESSE A L'OCCASION DE LA XIII ASSEMBLEE
Consommé Sole Pommes Salades Fruits Friandises Café
GENEVE, 10 SEPTEMBRE CLUB INTERNATIONAL
(51)

Men also quarreled when shipwrecked on the high seas.

History, as a registrar of events, will not paint a favorable picture of the Geneva community.

(52)

Photographer: "Try to stay together a bit more, guys, when you want a good picture."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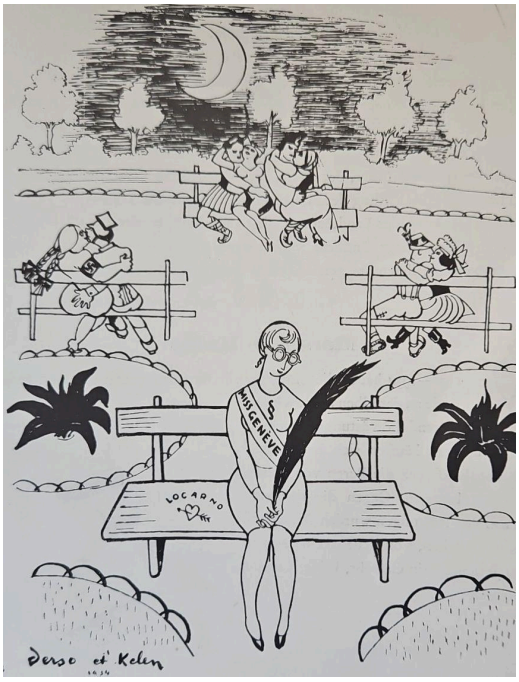
The mountain of files and resolutions never stopped growing.



(54)

In the end, Miss Geneva sat alone while the liaisons of the powers formed around her.

Disarmament

Of all the illusions of the gentle, quiet regulation of European affairs, that of disarmament was the greatest. When the world war ended, a world bristling with weapons surrounded Germany. These highly armed states now sat down together to “disarm”. From the outset, they only fought over the advantage in armaments. If the tiger, snake and buffalo – the parable was often used – had met to talk about “disarmament”, the tiger would have suggested abolishing horns, the buffalo suggesting fangs, and the snake would suggest claws. The naval powers were in favor of limiting land armaments, the land powers were in favor of limiting naval armaments; all the powers were in favor of abolishing the armaments that were most dangerous to them and that they themselves could not use.

Circular March

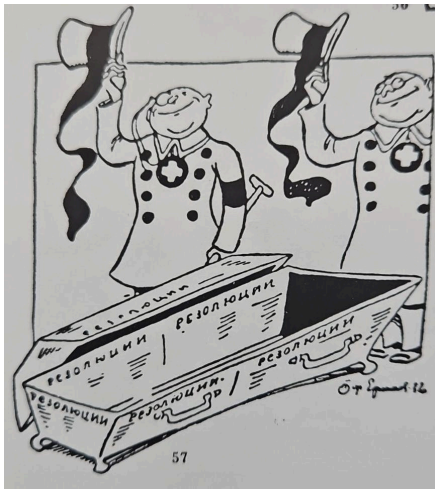
From 1930 to 1934, disarmament conferences were held and at the end they were in the same position as at the beginning. While armaments grew and grew, the piles of files and resolutions at the disarmament conference grew higher and higher. Speech after speech was made against the mounting armaments, but none of them brought down a wall of Jericho, a gun or a cannon.

(55)

Against the wall of the arms race, the appeal for disarmament was just a powerless whiff of the wind.

(56)

Leaning on its olive branch, the Conference on Disarmament has been "progressing" year after year.

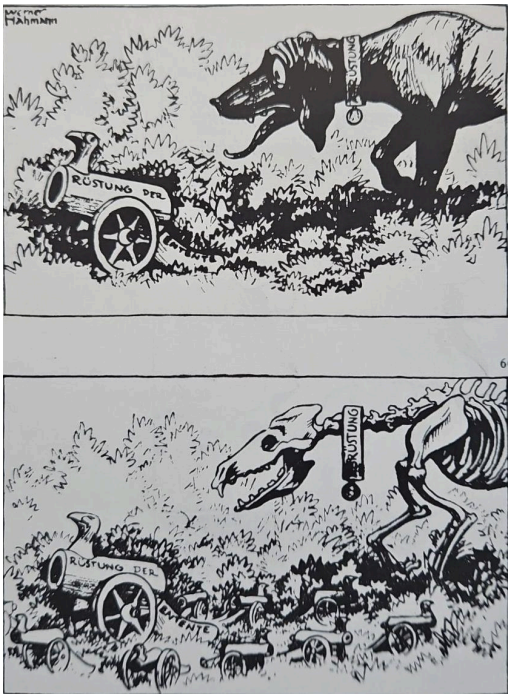


(57)

In resolutions, the disarmament was buried (according to official vocabulary, "brought to a conclusion").

(58)

It looked like the endless beard of a tired old man.



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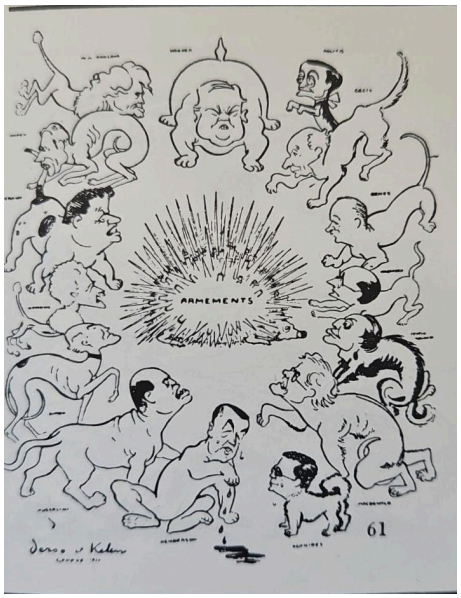
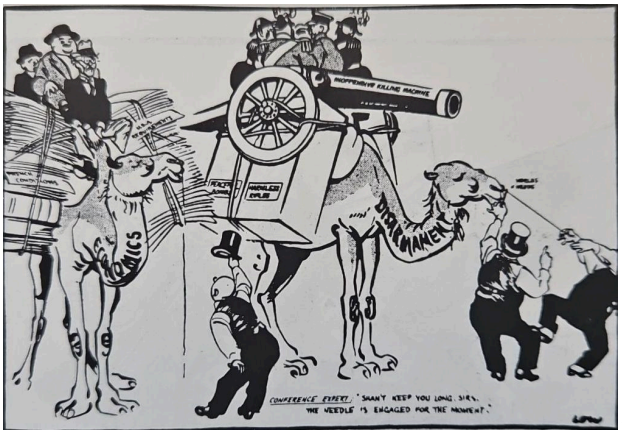
A modern-day Munchhausen tale reports that disarmament went hunting for armaments as a dog and, as a skeleton, is still on the prowl.



(61)

Everyone recoiled from the armored hedgehog; only the president of the conference, [Arthur] Henderson [Labor politician responsible for the League of Nations disarmament conference], got sore.

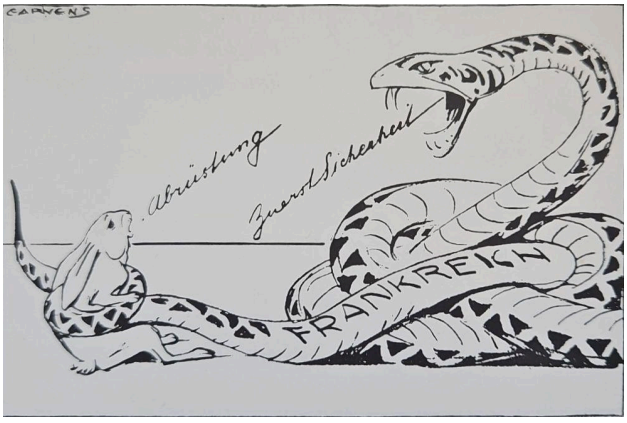


(62)

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the highly armed states to pass through the gates of disarmament.

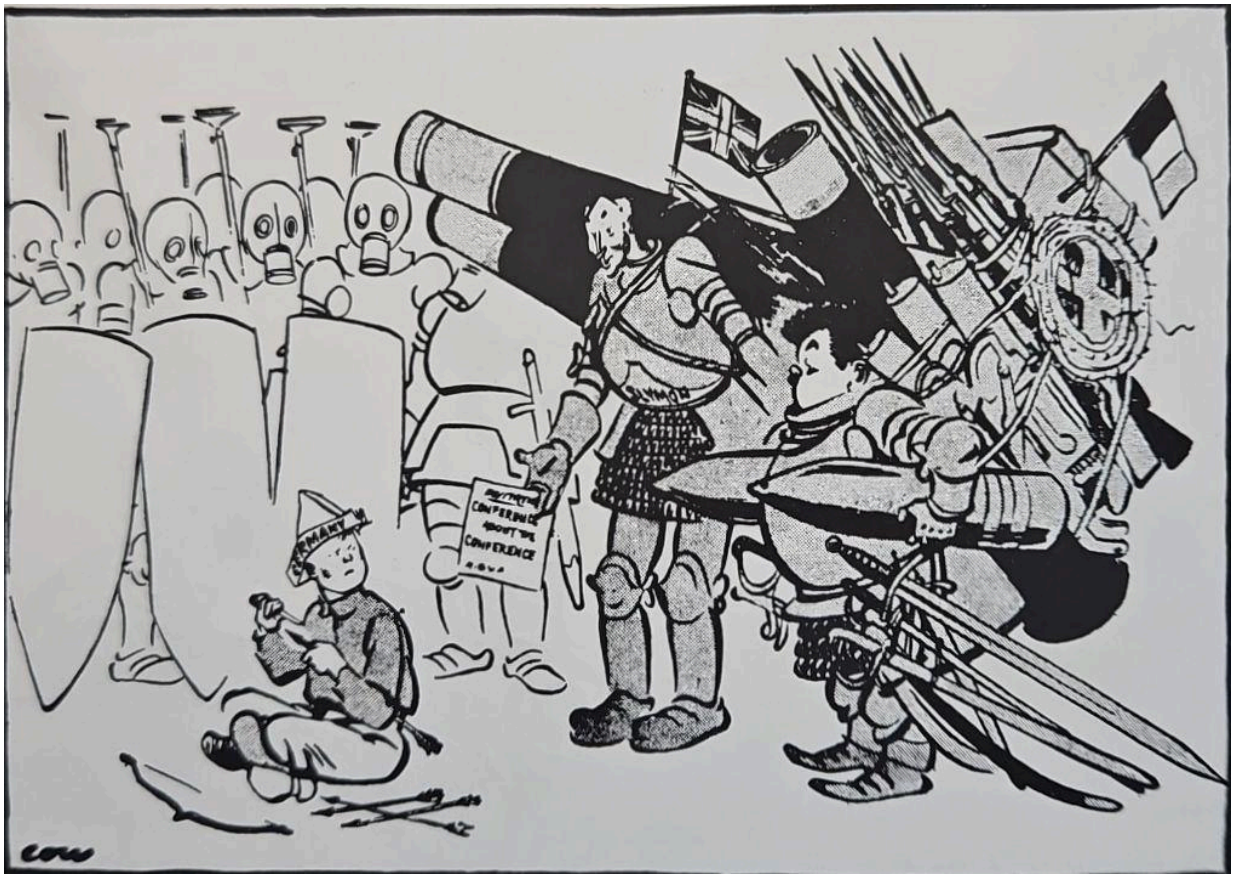
(63)

The arms race between armament and disarmament always seemed like the race between a modern race car and a children's toy.



(64)

The boa constrictor demanded safety from the rabbit in order to be able to "disarm".

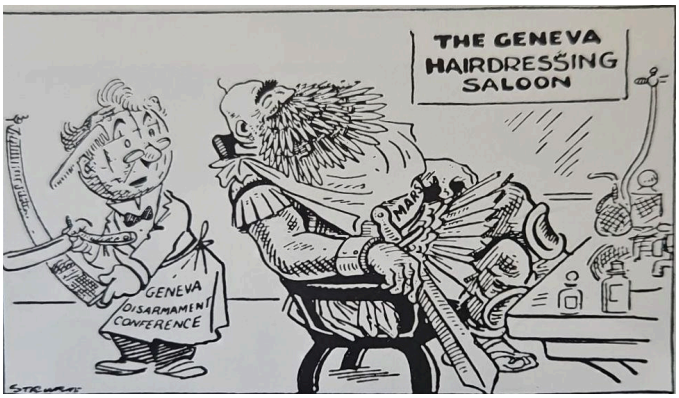


(65)

Only Germany should, could and had to "disarm". So they took away the most harmless knife from the German: "Can't you see that this is a disarmament conference?"

The “Deeds” of the Disarmament Conference

The disarmament conference's fight against the arms race was like trying to catch eagles with cobwebs.



(66)

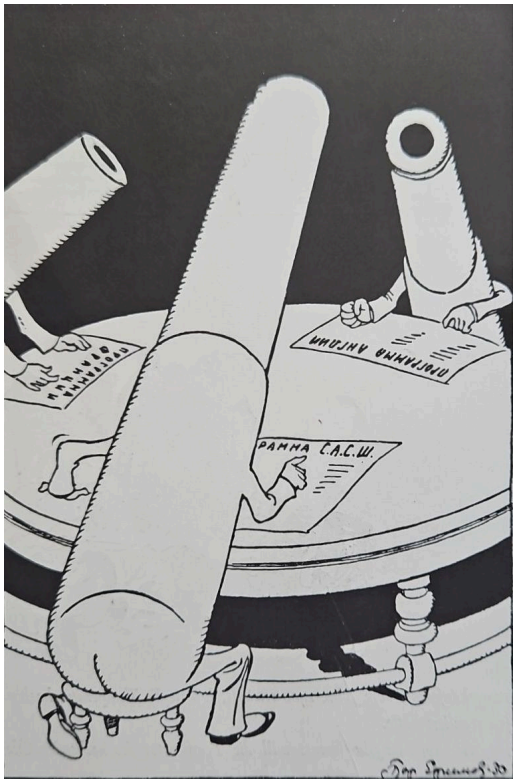
Mars has only had to suffer a tiny operation when the Disarmament Conference tried its hand at resolutions: He demanded a haircut at the Geneva barbershop when a shave was expected.

(67)

The saga of a disarmament conference in the year 1400 tells how it regulated the temperature of boiling oil used in siege warfare.
"Cheer up, brother! They say the disarmament conference wants to lower the temperature of the boiling oil.”

Cannons at the Negotiating Table

As I said, the highly armed states should disarm themselves. And the title Disarmament Conference sometimes sounds as funny as, for example, “Conference of Brewers to Reduce Alcohol Consumption.”



(68)

Cannons were also present at the conference table, so to speak.

(69)

A spiteful Soviet Russian cartoon depicts the Geneva disarmament baby with a strange pacifier in its mouth.

(70)

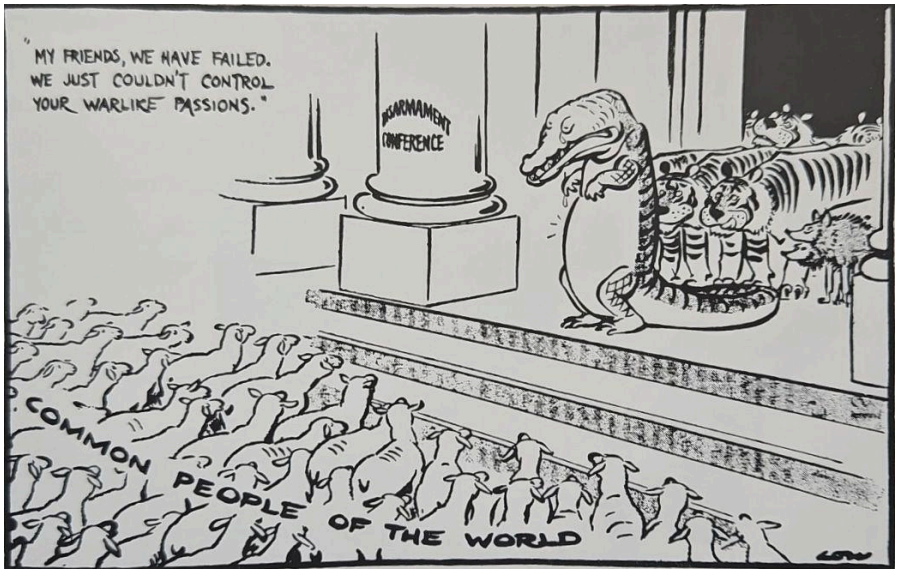
A cartoonist imagines that a picture of the Conference on Disarmament could be deciphered from the corridors of the Geneva hotels.

(71)

The shadows that the diplomats cast had the outlines of soldiers.

(72)

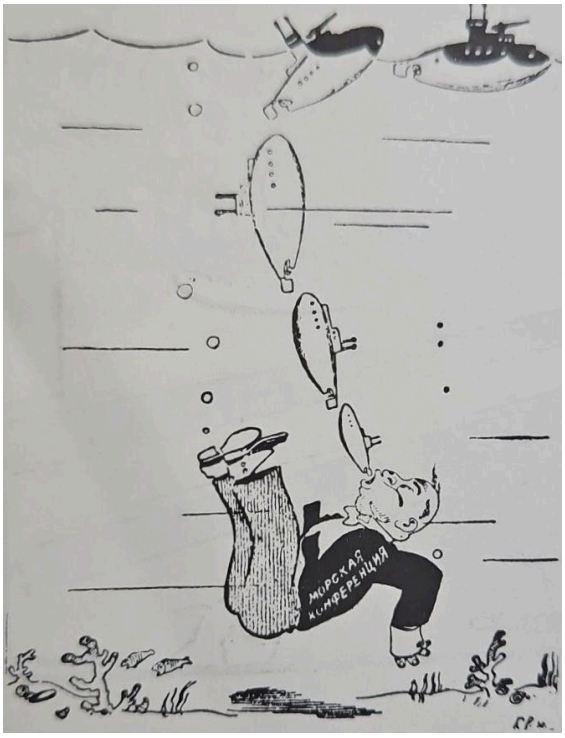
Cannons were the pulpit of their sermon of peace.


(73)

The warlike instincts of nations have become more powerful than the peace work of the conference, one of Geneva's leading men said. A crocodile, translated by the cartoonist, explains as the head of the world's predators to the rest of the animal kingdom, the common people: We have failed, we have not succeeded in keeping your warlike passions in check.

Fleet Disarmament

The same game was repeated with fleet disarmament. In contrast to land “disarmament”, which, with all its grandstanding, was only the steam hissing out of the world's enormous armaments machine, it had achieved some tangible results: the Washington [Naval] Treaty [1922], the London Agreement [London Naval Treaty, 1930], as examples. But it was the same results overall: the race for the lead, the fight for the disarmament of the opponent under the motto of disarmament, the struggle for the abolition of all weapons that meant strength for the opponent and a danger for oneself. Behind the hustle and bustle stood the interests of the arms industry like huge brake pads, waiting for the “business of death”.

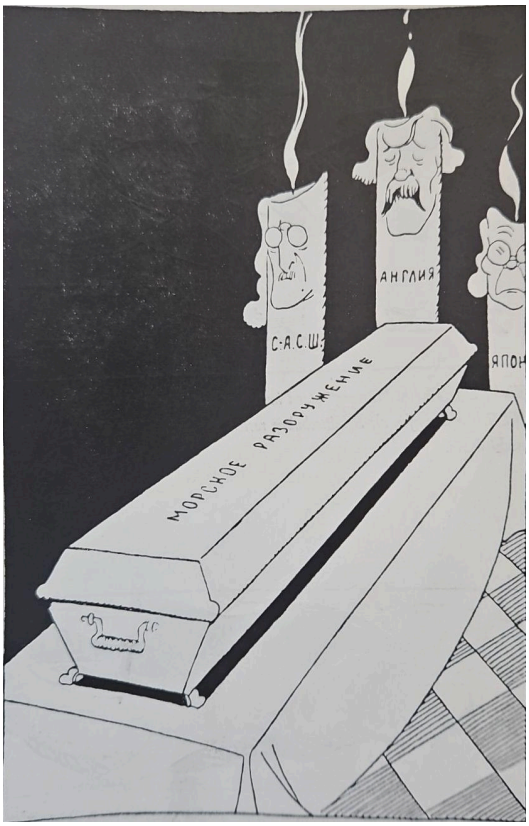


(74)

From the troubled waters of the disarmament conference, bubbles rose - lo and behold, they were new battleships.

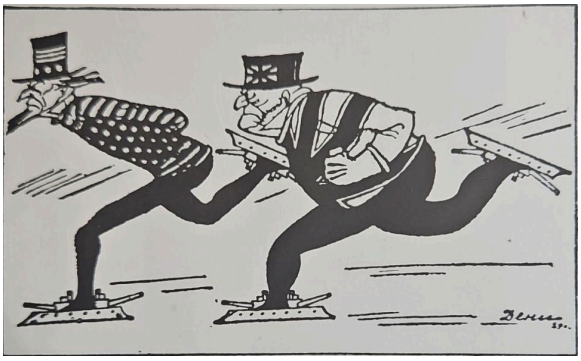
(75)

The naval conference was always in danger of being dragged down into the depths, because at its feet hung the gun barrel of the arms industry.



(76)

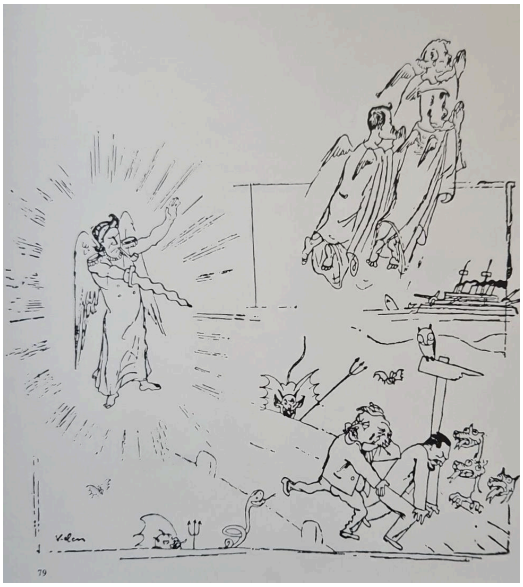
At her bier, her great lights languished.


(77)

Behind the "fleet disarmament" was always the struggle for naval supremacy. With battleships as the center of gravity, England and the USA raced each other in the race for naval power.

(78)

The smaller and poorer powers wanted to abolish the large battleships, which they could not afford and which put them at a disadvantage in the struggle for naval power. But the whale declared that it was "fundamentally opposed to the reduction of tonnage."


(79)

At the 1930 fleet conference, the heathen smaller naval powers Italy and France: they (Briand and [Dino] Grandi) were therefore expelled from the conference by the angel with the flaming sword (the American chairman of the conference, Norman Davis), while the others, led by MacDonald, soared upwards as glorified spirits.

Global Armament

"The nations, beset by a pressing crisis, no longer hope and hardly read the news about disarmament. These messages are becoming fewer and shorter, while the other messages are beginning to appear more frequently, namely the messages about armament on land, at sea and in the air... And finally, Her Majesty the Cannon will be asked to speak."
- Mussolini, May 13th 1934

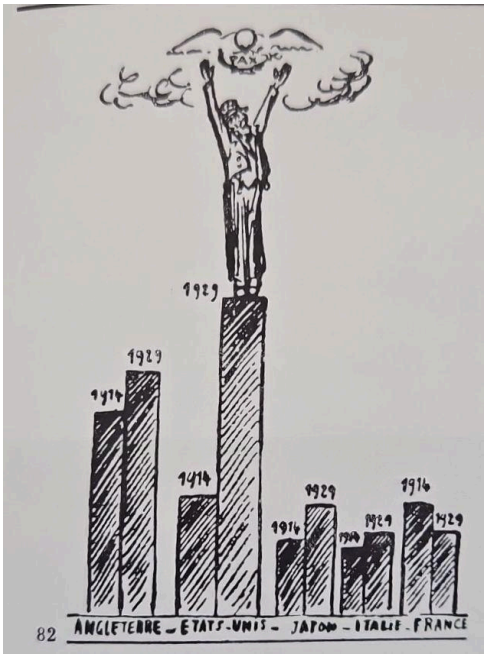
On June 19, 1919, the Powers signed the pledge that Germany's disarmament should be the harbinger of general disarmament. Instead, armaments have been laundered and increased. The result of fourteen years of "disarmament" - through the one-sided disarmament and defamation to the point of unworthiness of arms of the "defeated" - was a world bristling with arms.

(80)

France has gone ahead with a formidable armament; it has created a unique fortress in the world - frightened, the dove of peace flutters in France over a world of bayonets.

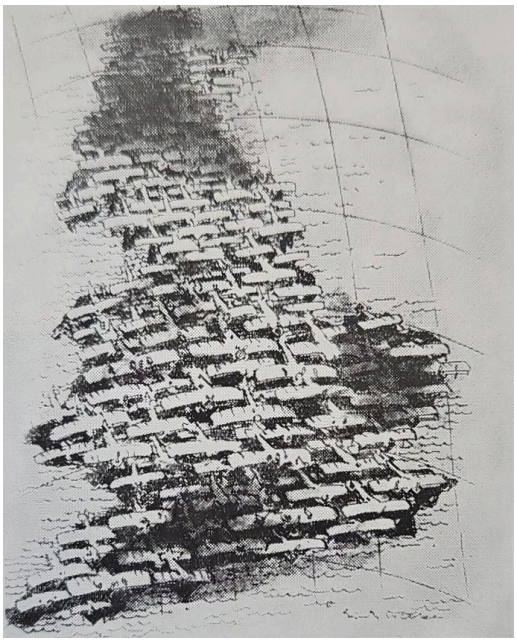
(81)

As early as 1928, the socialist Paul Boncour had created a military law whose motto was: "All Frenchmen, without distinction of age or sex, are obliged to take part in the defense of the country." The whole nation – babies, nannies and their lovers – stand to attention as Paul Boncour rides by as Minister of War.



(82)

Uncle Sam, for his part, was closest to the heavenly spheres of peace with the largest defense budget on earth.

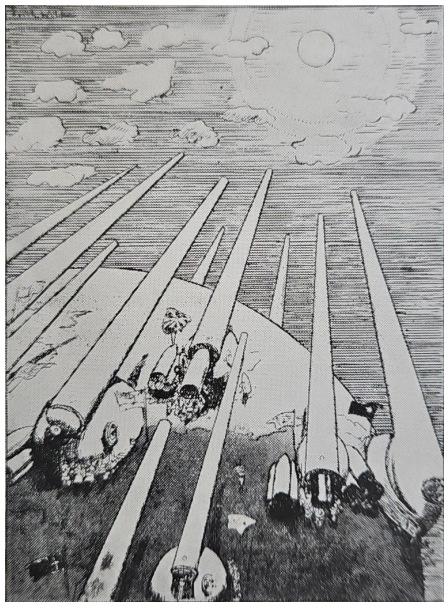

(83)

England's island was covered with dense swarms of aircraft following the 1934 air armament program and in the years that followed.

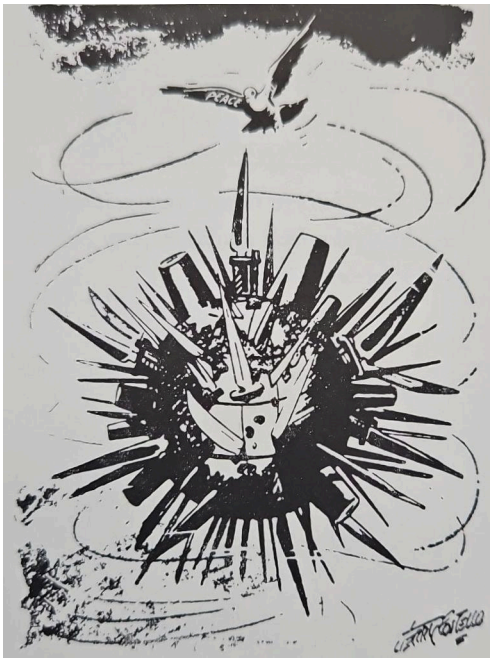
(84)

When Foreign Minister Sir John Simon and Lord Privy Seal [Anthony] Eden went to Berlin in 1935 for disarmament negotiations, England, according to the word of its statesmen, laid the card in the form of an armaments white paper dated March 1st, 1935, on the table, thus giving its peace mission a strangely resonant salute.

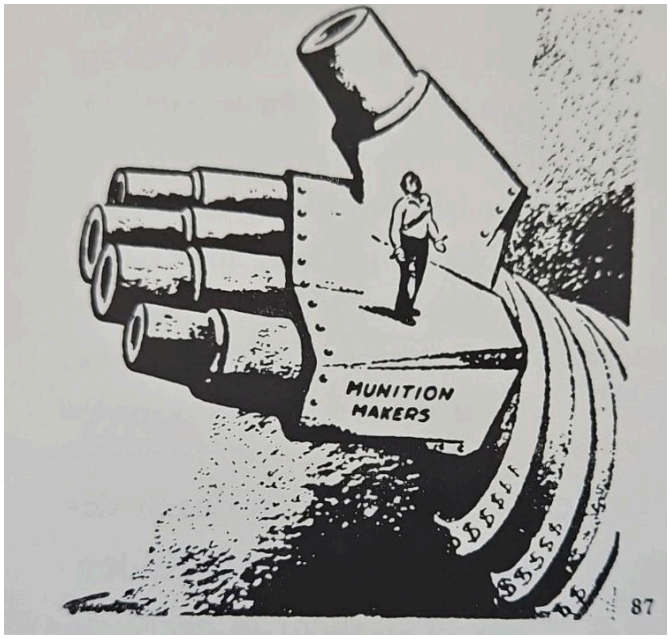
The victors of 1918, who were then masters of the world and promised an empire of peace, have more than ever delivered the world to the madness of the arms race.

 (85)

The arms industry survived all the challenges of disarmament in undiminished prosperity and always knew how to prove its right to exist. The arms industry, imagines a draftsman, in the event of the success of disarmament, applies to the League of Nations to organize a shooting competition to the moon.


(86)

The world stared unblinkingly at the weapons. The dove of peace had no place in the thicket.



(87)

This is how the American illustrator can imagine how civilization rests in the "hollow hand" of the arms industry, -

(88)

and how the world reacts to the photographer's "polite reassurance" from a gun barrel.

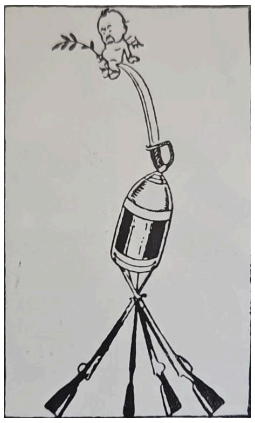
(89)

In 1918, a pacified world had been promised, but peace was further away than ever, and it became madness to renounce weapons in the midst of a terrible world crisis, while dark forces were raising their heads. During a downpour, the association for the abolition of umbrellas does not seem quite appropriate.

Everlasting Peace

"Henceforth war will no longer be regarded as a legitimate means for arbitrary and selfish acts. Its threat will henceforth be lifted from the economic, social, and political life of nations. The smaller nations will henceforth enjoy real independence in international discussions. Free from the old bondage, the nations that have signed this new pact will gradually discard the habit of associating the idea of national supremacy and national interest with the idea of force."

- Briand signing the pact to abolish war


(90)

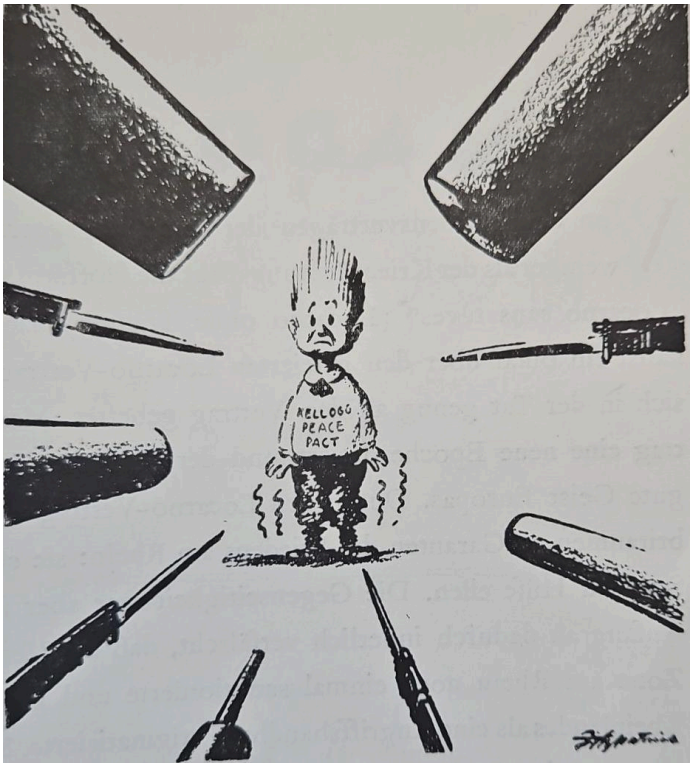
In 1928, war was officially condemned by the so-called Pact for the Prohibition of War (Briand-Kellog Pact). But this did not bring peace to the world; armaments remained and increased as before. War could not be eliminated from the world by a decision that it should no longer exist, if only because a just peace, the only kind that lasts, was not created.

(91)

Sometimes it seemed as if war was to be eliminated from the world by hypnosis: You are outlawed, you are declared an outlaw, you are no longer.

(92)

Wars continued to rage – and so the pact that was supposed to declare war an act of treachery became a horrendous "piece of paper".



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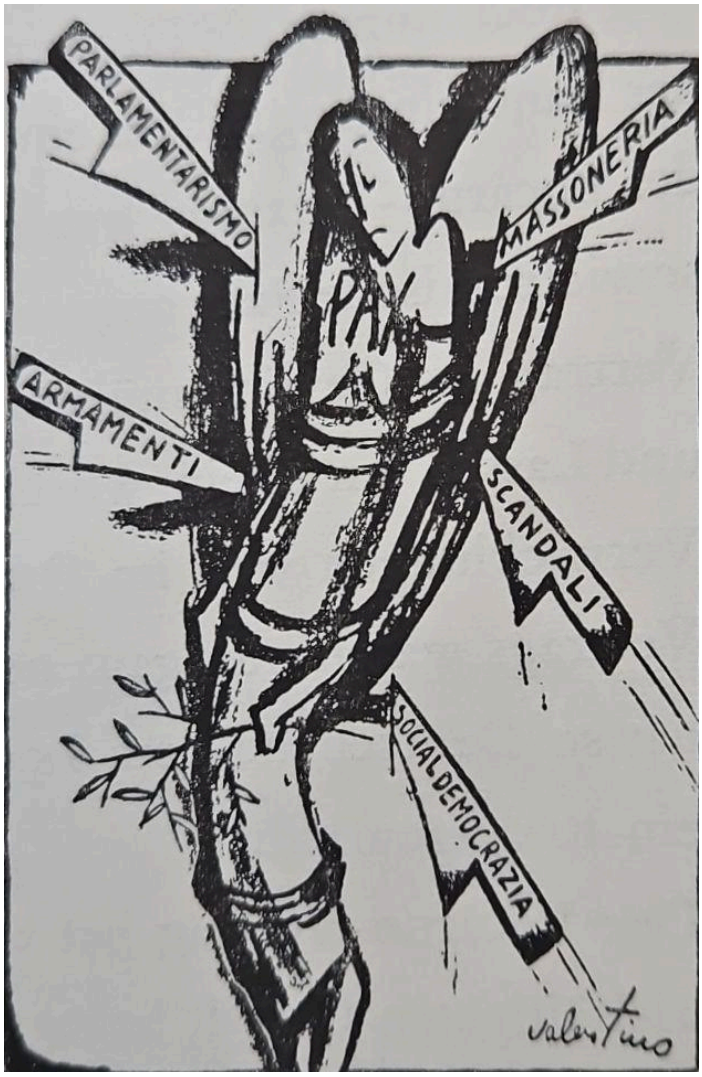
Three years after the signing of the pact, he appeared to an American draftsman as a pathetic, miserable creature, with guns and bayonets pointed at his chest.



(94)

War was "outlawed," but it continued to prevail in the midst of peace. For - this is the idea of an Italian drawing - the forces that undermine it internally continue to prevail in the world: armaments, freemasonry, parliamentarism, corruption, social democracy. Thus peace remained forged to the cross.

Locarno

Of the peace treaties in post-war history, it was Locarno, and not the Covenant of War, that aroused the hopes of humanity. A French journalist called a book about the celebrated Locarno Treaty “Locarno sans rêves” (Locarno without Dreams). Dreams have indeed been pinned on the treaty enough. A new era has been dated from the Locarno publishing house, and the “spirit of Locarno” was for many the good spirit of Europe. Through the Locarno Treaty, Italy and Great Britain became guarantors of peace on the Rhine: they were to come to the aid of the attacked state. However, reciprocity was internally distorted from the outset by the Locarno Treaty in that the treaty once again sanctioned the demilitarized zone on the Rhine and virtually stigmatized the occupation of the Rhineland as an act of aggression. Thus the threat still lurked behind the treaty that Germany's “march” into its own country should be an attack on another country. The burden of the one-sidedness of the Locarno Treaty became unbearable when the Soviet Pact, the French-Soviet Russian Pact of Mutual Assistance of May 2nd, 1935, brought the Locarno Treaty into the tangle of unmanageable combinations. France's actions on the Rhine, which were the subject of the Locarno Treaty, could now depend on developments far to the east; the old game of the Locarno Treaty had now been mixed with completely new and dangerous cards. On March 7th, 1936, Germany put an end to the Locarno Treaty, at least in its old form.

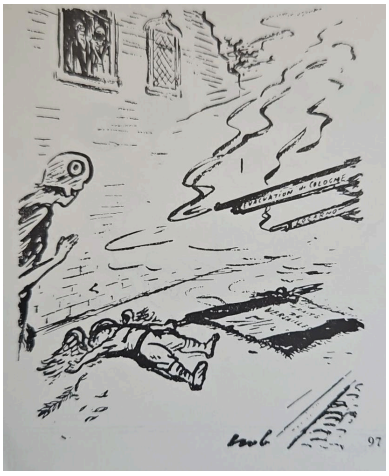
The Locarno Treaty has worn many faces and masks: in caricature, it presents itself in the most diverse guise.

(95)

A peace agreement seems to be taking shape on the northern Italian lakes. As the foreign ministers circle each other in the diplomatic sport, Chamberlain and Briand paint “I love you” on the ice, regarding Germany's “clear the Rhineland” as too prosaic.

(96)

The Locarno Treaty seemed like the first landing after the flood: on it, like on Mount Ararat, rested the little boat of the Geneva Convention – albeit precariously and dangerously. Briand sent the dove to bring back the message of peace, but only a duck brought back the longed-for branch.

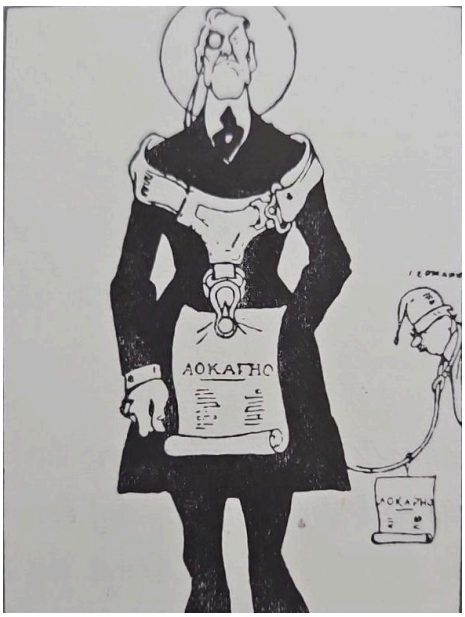

(97)

For Germany, Locarno was often praised as a happy message. But a bitter awakening followed. The question of reparations made no headway, and the evacuation of the Rhineland took place only after long, humiliating negotiations.

Some French nationalists, however, saw the treaty from the outset as the end of their "peace": the evacuation of Cologne and the Locarno Treaty seemed to them like mortal shots fired at the Treaty of Versailles.

(98)

This was the mask that deceived many. But behind it remained the face of the Treaty of Versailles (as the Soviet Russian caricature mercilessly depicted it, until finally the French Republic attached the Locarno Treaty to the cart of Moscow and all criticism fell silent).

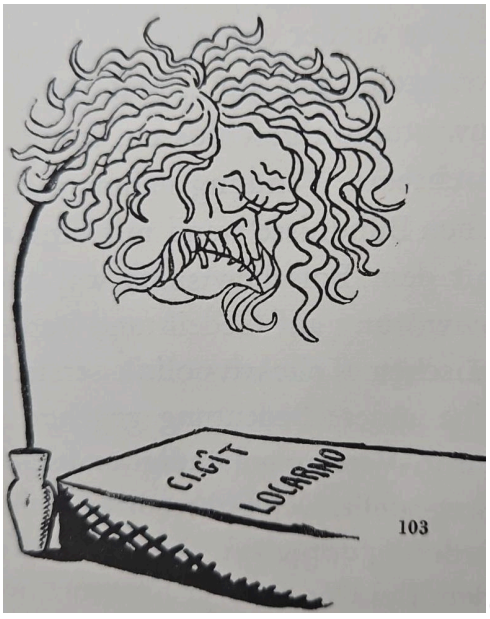


(99)

Sir Austen Chamberlain, who seemed to have made Great Britain the arbiter of Europe with the Locarno Treaty, wears the treaty as a necklace of medals around his neck according to the Soviet Russian caricature, while the rope is placed around Germany's neck.

(100)

Some English people were concerned about the treaty, which threatened to involve England in the fighting on the continent; when the honest English citizen looked into the waters of Lake Maggiore, on the shores of which the treaty was concluded, he saw himself there in the armor of a soldier in the expeditionary forces.



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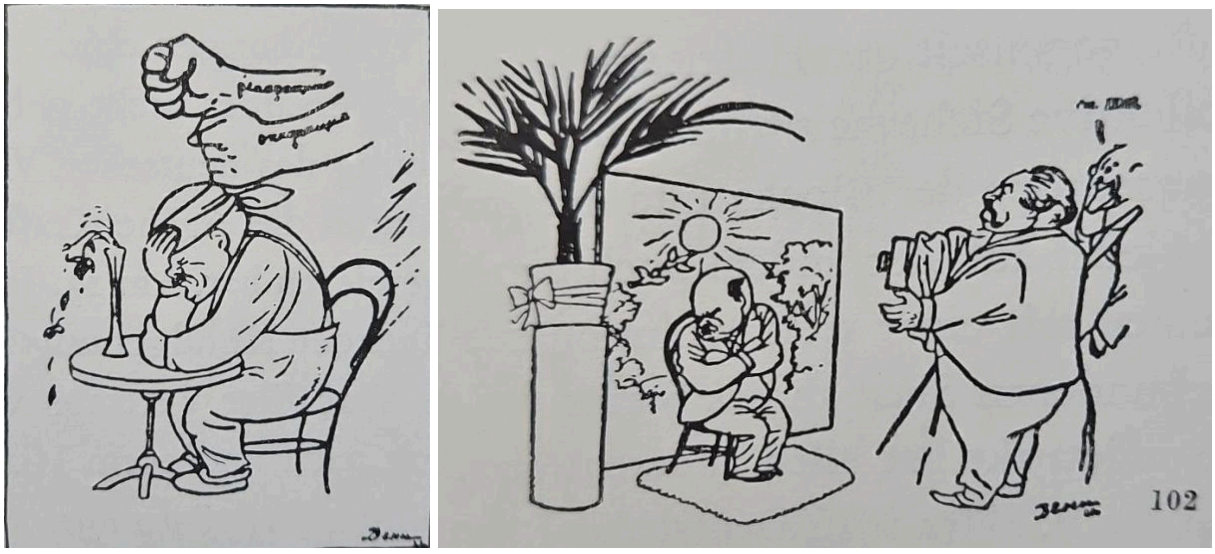
The "spirit of Locarno" soon gave up the ghost. Briand watched over his grave like a chrysanthemum.



(101)(102)

Reparations and the evacuation of the Rhineland gave Stresemann a nasty hangover after the orgy of Thoiry. Photography as a souvenir of the festival became somewhat difficult.

Epilogue: The End of Versailles

"I feel the bitterness of the present situation no less than you do; it is the consequence of a great illusion to which the men who, in the Treaty of Versailles, disregarding the lessons of history and reality, believed they could keep a great nation in a state of disarmament for an indefinite period of time, have surrendered. How could anyone imagine that twenty-seven nations, which happened to be "allied and associated" at that moment, would also stick together in the future to impose on a Germany, whose final unification was sealed by the Treaty of Versailles, what Napoleon, the almighty lord of two-thirds of Europe, could not impose on the small kingdom of Prussia? It is the inescapable law of history that a vanquished people will rise again sooner or later."

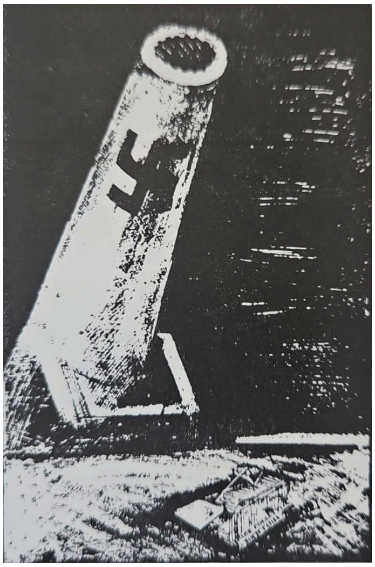
- Count Broqueville, April 6th, 1934 in the Belgian Senate

The Locarno Treaty and the Kellog Pact, all of which were praised as the promises of a new era, had not yet banished the ghost of Versailles. The end of Versailles only came with the inner elevation of the German people, with a new will of the German nation to secure for itself, through its own strength, the place in Europe that Providence has assigned to it. On January 13th, 1935, the German Saar people declared their allegiance to the German Reich in an overwhelming referendum; an injustice of the Treaty of Versailles was wiped out. On March 7th, 1935, after endless back and forth in the negotiations and the eternal, eternally unfulfilled promises of disarmament, the German Reich restored its own military sovereignty and reintroduced general conscription.

On May 2nd, 1935, France signed a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, which was a decisive and terrible turn for "collective security": pre-war Europe of blocs and military alliances was resurrected; moreover, it was also an alliance with Bolshevism, which put a state that was linked at the hip of a world revolutionary conspiracy to the helm of European collective politics. The Soviet Pact has given all other treaties a different meaning. Thus, on March 7th, 1936, Germany denounced the Locarno Treaty and re-established its full sovereignty over the Rhineland. In doing so, the Führer presented to the world a grand plan for a new European order. The new Locarno, based on a Europe without victors and vanquished, has not yet become a reality.

(104)

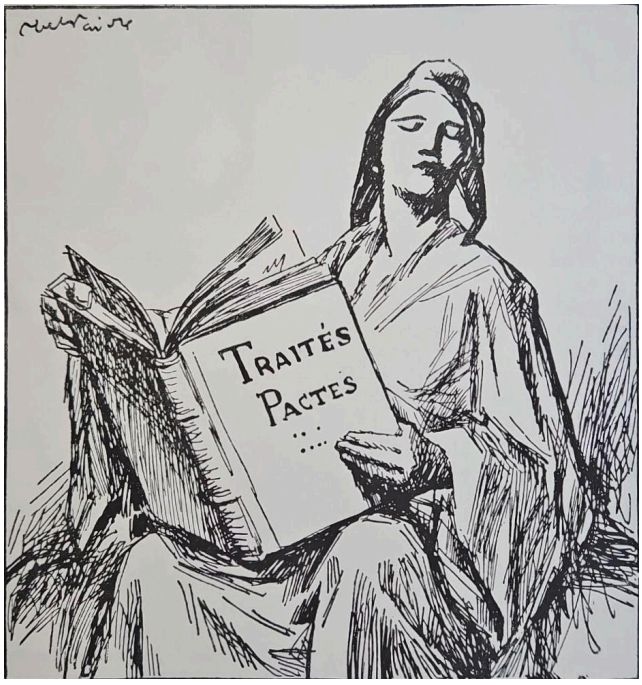
The front-line fighters – to whom the Führer often addressed himself – had the least to do with the diplomatic and publicist confusion of the European crisis: "They are no diplomats," says the Dutch illustrator.


(105)

They were also the least involved in the most frightening impression in the world, when Germany once again carried weapons. But the world first had to awaken from its illusions. The Italian illustrator juxtaposes illusion and reality: the mousetrap of collective security and the armament of Germany in the ghostly form in which it occasionally saw the world in its psychosis of fear.

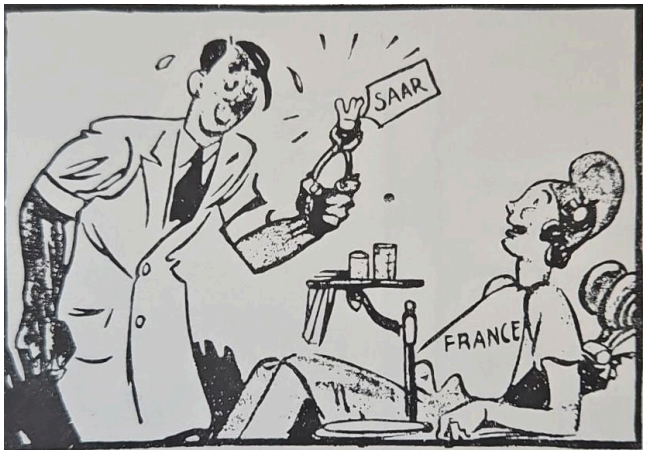
(106)

France looks in surprise at the German soldier who grew up: "You were still so small in 1914!" (Incidentally, the actual proportions look quite different from what this Chinese drawing suggests.)



(107)

Sadly, France holds the collection of treaties and pacts in her hands: they have become a collection of autographs.



(108)

All the great European catastrophes that were always prophesied when the German Reich made its vital demands have always been averted. The Saar question, which was so heatedly discussed, was resolved quite simply by the Saar region expressing its will, so that everyone wondered what all the excitement had been about. "I hardly felt it," the English illustrator makes Marianne say when she "had that tooth removed."

(109)

The restoration of universal conscription was also ultimately accepted by the powers: The caricature of foreign countries did not have to bring out the big guns to take aim. When Madame Europe – as this English cartoon puts it – sees the broken vase of the Treaty of Versailles, she says half-indulgently: "She must have dropped it on purpose," to which the reply is: "No, I did it deliberately, and I quit."

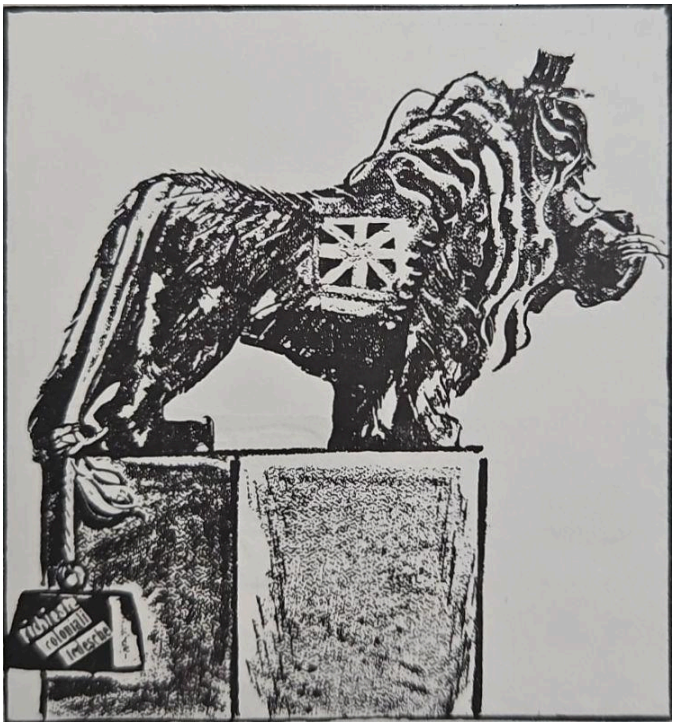
(110)

On January 30th, 1937, the Führer once again explained his European policy: While he has both feet on the ground, France is living in the clouds of collective security, alliances, Russian friendship, the League of Nations ideology and utopias.

(111)

The response to the German peace offer of March 7th, 1936 was "general staff discussions" and "questionnaires". This is how an English illustrator portrays the British government on a trip into the unknown: the attached addresses read "collective security"; but the train is heading towards military alliances. [Stanley] Baldwin, whom the caricaturist likes to depict with his lips sealed*; his successor Neville Chamberlain, and opposite him Sir John Simon. has lost the tickets.

*"Sealed Lips" is in reference to a speech Baldwin made in the House of Commons on December 10th, 1935, concerning the Abyssinian Crisis, in which he stated, "my lips are not yet unsealed". Stanley would be lampooned for this remark in the British press and in political cartoons as mute in the face of crisis. See the article "What Sealed Baldwin's Lips?" by Marguerite Potter, "The Historian", Volume 27 No. 1, November 1964]



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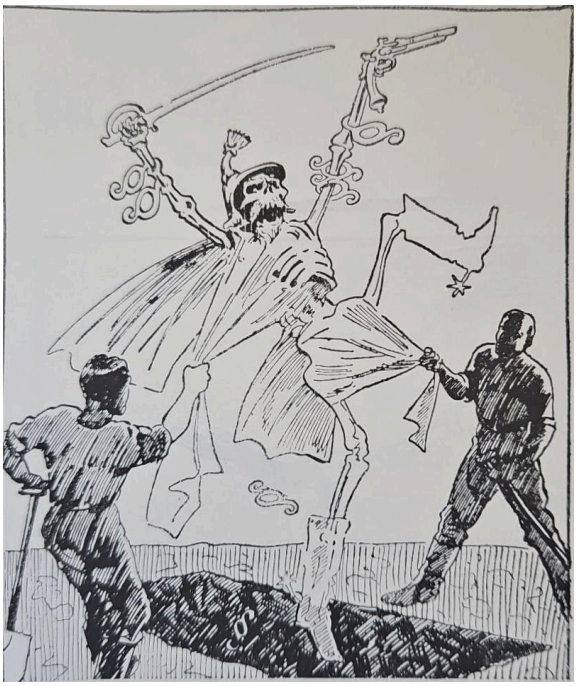
England has so far shown little inclination to colonial revision, which would place world peace on a new footing. Will the English lion be able to withstand the weight of Germany's colonial demands?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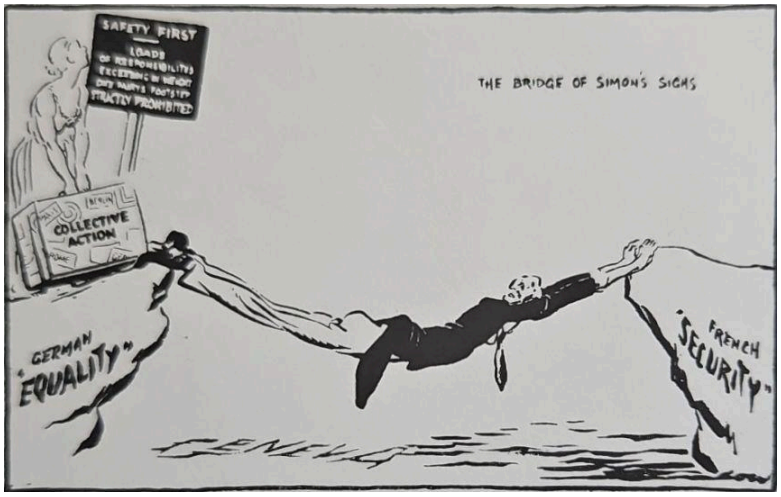
In this way, the ghost of Versailles repeatedly rises from the dead, where it should rightly rest.

(114)

Stowaways are traveling on the ship of the League of Nations and collective security, with the Grim Reaper in a Soviet cap at the helm, steering the Negus helplessly through dangerous cliffs and shallows.

(115)

In her search for the Fata Morgana of Locarno, Marianne [symbol of the French Republic] is wandering through the desert.



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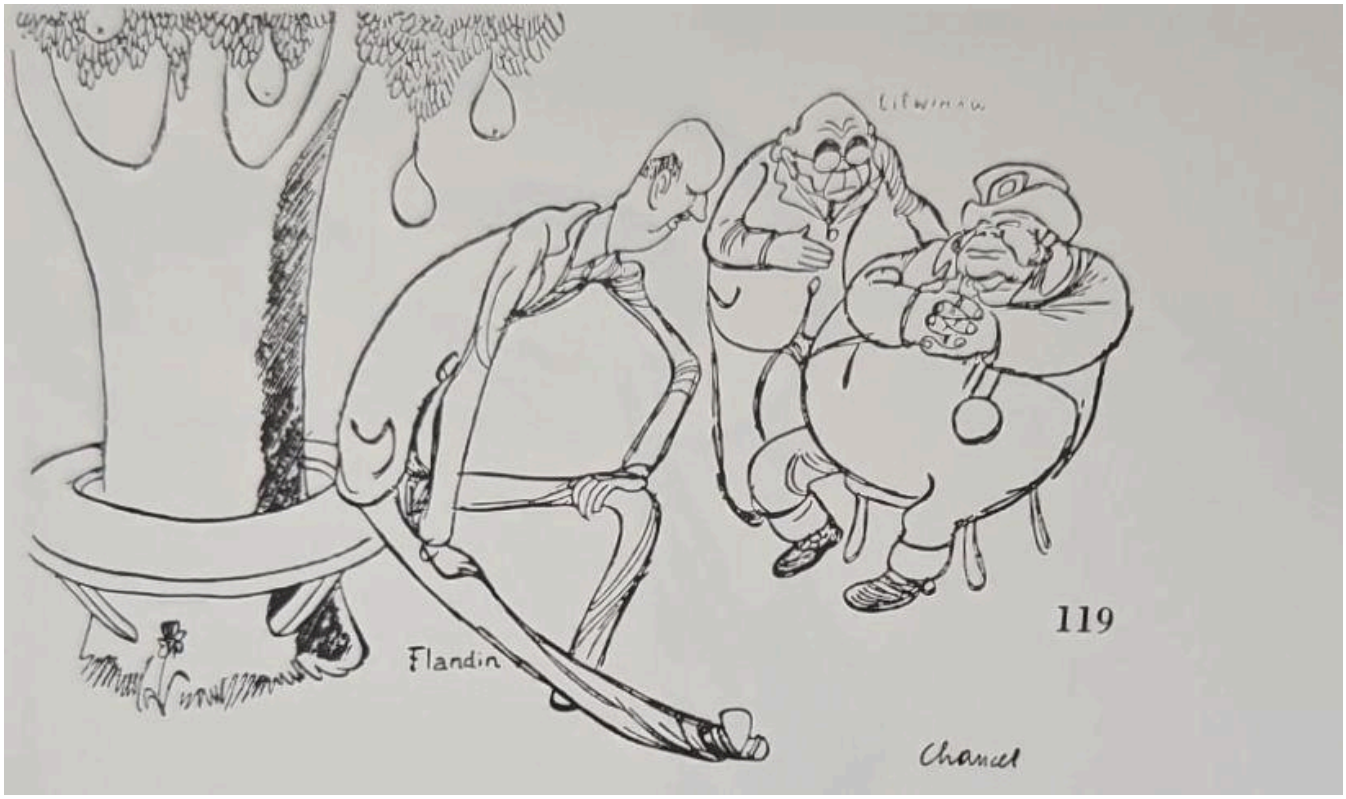
In the struggle for Lorcano and the European order, England tries to establish the "balance" now and then between Germany and France, and Sir John Simon as foreign minister forms a new strange "bridge of sighs" between German equality and French security.

(117)

The French cartoonist makes the English bitterly pay for this. A cartoonist has John Bull protest, after the denunciation of the Locarno Treaty, stepping between the German and French bayonets: "How shocking! You're not going to fight over a scrap of paper, are you?"

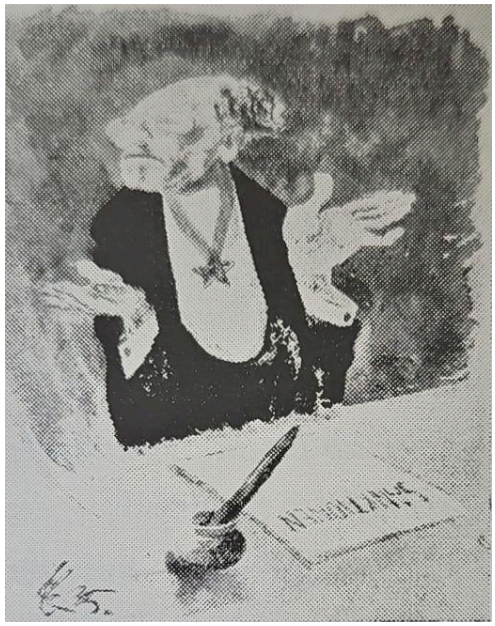
(118)

A short-sighted, blinded gentleman is the Englishman who, after the German peace offer of March 7th, 1936, wants to see the peace dove.



(119)

Some Frenchmen bitterly complained that after March 7th, 1936, when England refused to take collective action against Germany, England had cheated France out of the opportunity of applying sanctions against Italy: "Yes," an Italian cartoon character lets John Bull say, "we made a Mediterranean pact, but the Rhineland is not on the Mediterranean."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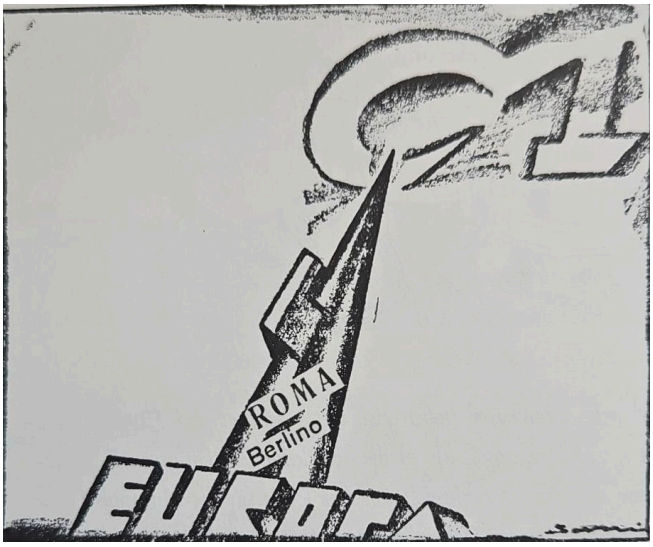
There were more than a few who were willing to go on a crusade against "dictatorships." "Fascist is fascist," they said within their ranks, "so there should be sanctions against the Nazis too!"

(121)

The new Lorcano has only just arrived, and under all the circumstances, it has only made slow headway. Lorcano's train was late, and the Western powers are waiting uneasily on the platform with the train's driver, the Secretary General of the League of Nations.



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Finally, in the midst of the dangers of the Soviet pact, the ideologies of the League of Nations and Spanish anarchy, Italian-German understanding has emerged as the lightning rod of a European crisis,

(123)

and the Berlin-Rome axis is effortlessly withstanding the pressure of Europe's subversive forces.

2. The Abyssinian War

The Abyssinian Conflict

"We do not demand monopolies and privileges for ourselves, but we do not want the established, the satiated and the conservatives from all sides to prevent the intellectual, political and economic expansion of fascist Italy."

- **From Mussolini's speech of March 18th, 1934, to the Five-Year Assembly of the Fascist Party**

Where, according to the Biblical accounts, the wise men from the East journeyed, strange signs would appear in the sky in Christmas 1935: flashing, steely birds that sent death and destruction.
In October 1935, war had broken out between Abyssinia and Italy. When Italy left the peace conference in Versailles, it felt that it had come away empty-handed and had received only crumbs from the table of the great world and colonial powers. At the rise of fascism, the decision was made – Mussolini spoke these words during the Abyssinian conflict – to "settle old and new scores" and to make Italy a great power and an empire again, imitating ancient Rome, whose fasces fascism chose as its emblem. The defeat of Adwa in 1896 almost eliminated Italy from the ranks of the truly great powers at the time; therefore, Italy had set to work in East Africa to undertake its great venture in world politics. In December 1934, the bloody incident of Ual-Ual occurred, resulting in the first deaths of the Abyssinian war. The guns, as the three-year arbitration commission later established, "went off by themselves"; but the genie was now out of the bottle.
On October 3rd, 1935, war broke out.

(124)

Italy has stated that it is marching at the head of the rising proletarian nations of the world, and wants to take its rights by force from the satiated, who praise the peace enjoyed by the happily prosperous. Italy scoffs that the satiated and prosperous constantly ask the "have-nots", "Why can't everyone be as peaceful as we?" This question is posed to all those who live in cramped conditions and are hardly able to offer overflowing energies a field of activity. They, who are decried as "forces of unrest," are forever asked by those who defend the status quo: "Why can't you live as peacefully as we do?"

Italy and its Mission

“It is important to keep in mind the indisputable fact that, contrary to what one believes and is accustomed to saying, the Abyssinian Empire is not at all a homogeneous and unified state or, as the nostalgic admirers of the past say, the last independent African nation-state. The Abyssinian empire as it exists today represents only the most humiliating enslavement of several African tribes, which have centuries-old traditions of independence, by another African tribe, the Abyssinians.”

- **From a speech by Undersecretary of State for the Colonies [Alessandro] Lessona on May 7th, 1935 in the Italian Chamber on Italian colonial policy**

As Italy prepared her initial thrust, she brought a great accusation against Abyssinia: that she was not a unified state, but a conglomeration of peoples held together with difficulty by force; that the state which the League of Nations, as its member, was supposed to protect as a sovereign, whose cause many praised as the sacred cause of the small nations, is itself a colonial power that has barely taken root in the conquered territories and only makes its presence felt there through slave traders. In contrast to this, Italy has upheld the old colonial mission of Rome. In the Italian view, the road builder and the soldier should advance together in the tradition of the Roman Empire. For, as Mussolini said, Italy's historic goals are eternal: to have feet firmly planted in Asia and Africa. Italy wants to fulfill its mission, in the words of the Duce, to bring Africa into the circle of world civilization. Whether the white peoples still have the strength to rule and lead the world, Mussolini proclaimed, that is the question of their will.

(125)

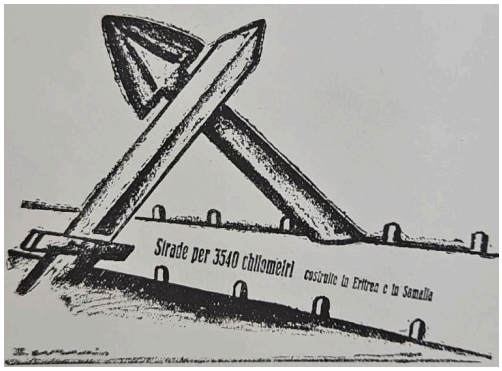
Italy never tired of painting a picture of Abyssinia for the world and the League of Nations - misery, anarchy, terrible oppression, slavery - all characteristics of Abyssinia, which bears the cross: "Member of the League of Nations."

(126)

To the Italians, Abyssinia seemed like a poisonous tree whose roots had clawed their way into the ground. The Italian generals in East Africa are in the process of cutting it down.

(127)

The Italian nation has boasted that it conquered Abyssinia with the spade and the sword, thus opening it up to civilization. The rifle and the spade are used to build the legions' guidepost.



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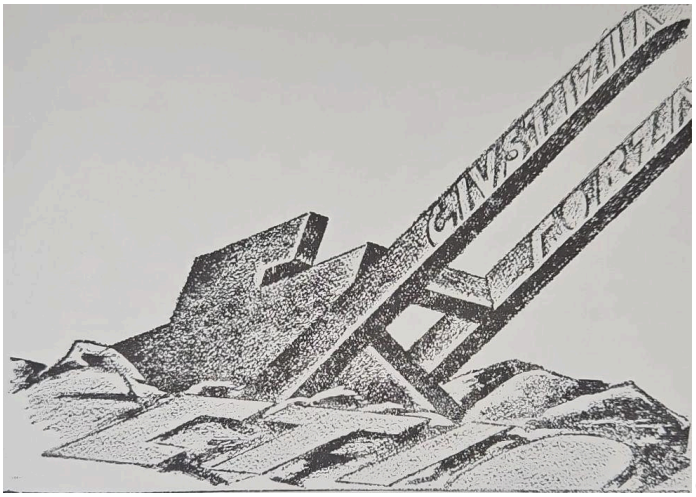
Their triumphal arch is also formed from the spade and rifle.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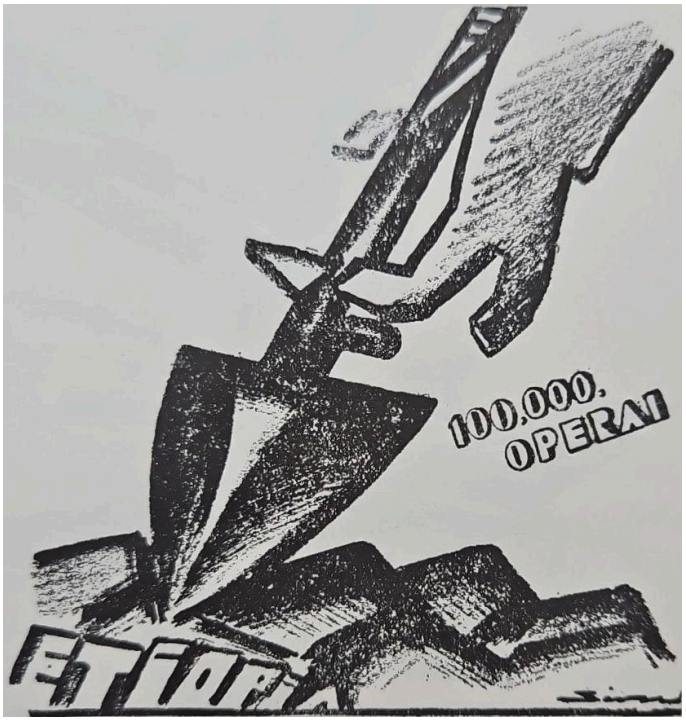
The Italians envisioned the rule of Rome as a plow turning the soil for the new era in Abyssinia,

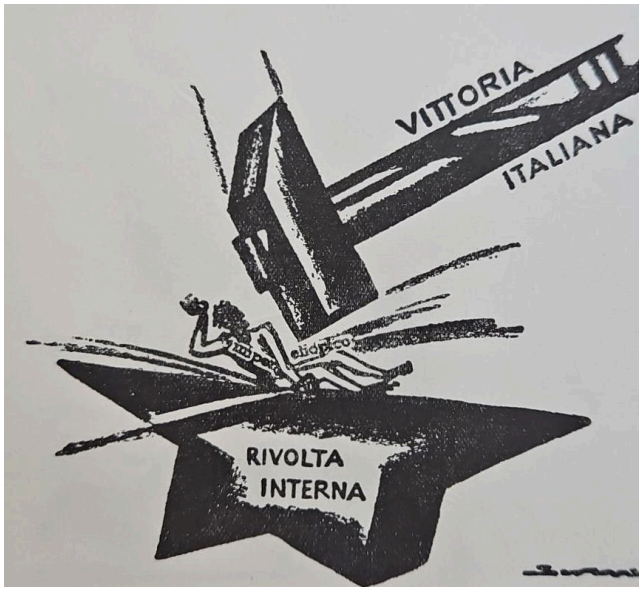


(130)

just as the Italian boot had plowed the soil of Italy.

(131)

The course of the war proved some of the Italian accusations against Abyssinia right. The Abyssinian state proved to be highly fragile. The subjugated peoples, especially the Gallas [a tribe in Ethiopia], quickly refused allegiance and preferred to make common cause with the Italians. Italy could sneer: "Look, these are the aggressors!"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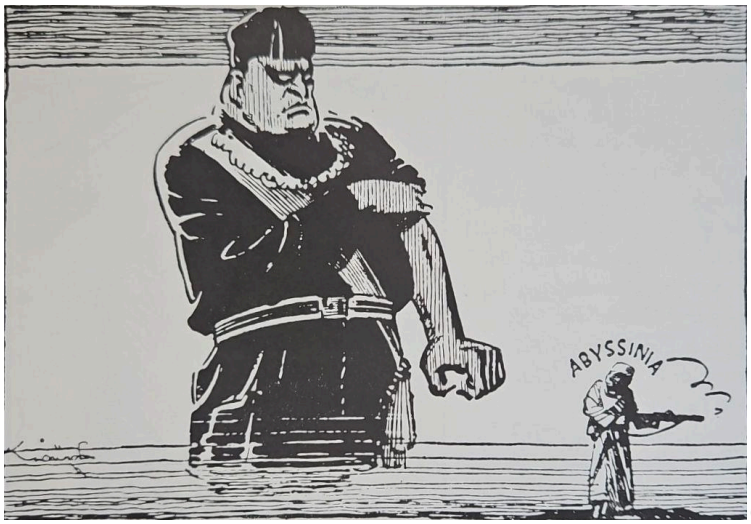
Thus the rule of the Negus [Ethiopian word for "king"] was indeed caught between a rock and a hard place.

False Prophet

“To bring an army of almost 250,000, the flower of Italy's men, to a barren coast 2,000 miles from home, be disapproved of by the whole world, be without domination of the sea, and then in this situation commit to a series of campaigns against a people and in regions which no conqueror in 4,000 years of conquest has deemed worthy - to do this is to risk one's luck in a way that has no parallel in history.
Perhaps the day will come when Italy will be grateful to old friends like Britain for helping to save it from a potentially deadly trap.”
- From a speech by Churchill on October 3rd, 1935

(133)

When Italy prepared for her East African campaign, a tremendous wave of anti-Italian propaganda swept across the globe. The catchwords: militarism, world conquest, use of force, idolatry of power, which had once done their terrible work against Germany in the world war, now rebounded against Italy.



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There was talk of a saber-rattling Italy – of the dark, cruel shadow of Mussolini over Abyssinia –

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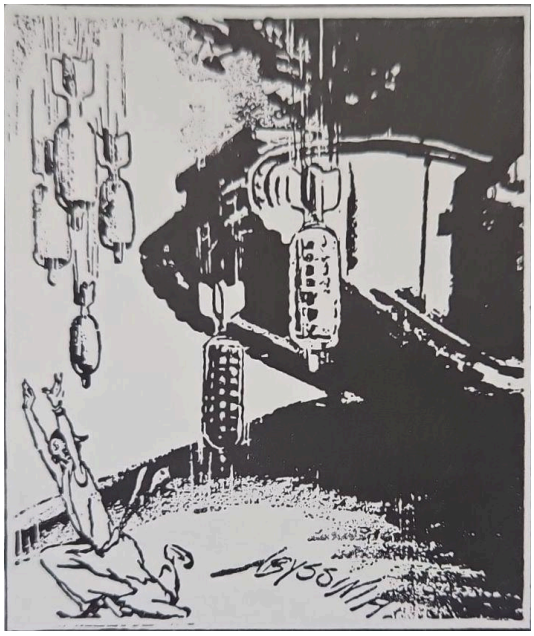
of the first misstep of the Italian boot, trampling on world opinion.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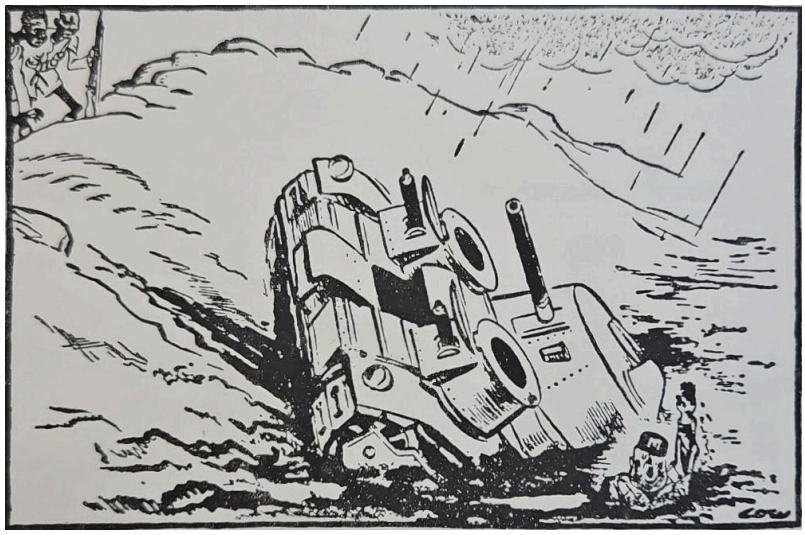
The paradox was caricatured in many different ways, with the new civilization being brought to Africa at the point of the bayonet (as if the rest of Africa had been won with rose water!). The Italian slogans were given a mocking undertone: civilization is on the march.

(137)

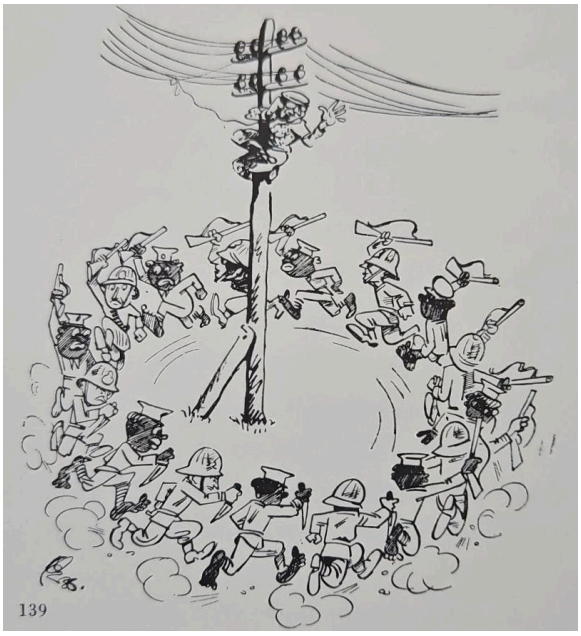
The white man takes responsibility.

The world was full of predictions of a terrible collapse of Italy in Abyssinia and the fruitful end of a gambler who bets everything. Only the story did not dance as the world opinion whistled.



(138)

There were setbacks in the war. Towards the end of 1935, the battle swayed back and forth somewhat. The caricature of the world press provided its illustrations:
when Mussolini announced, during a halt in operations, that the colonial war, in which one had to work forward more often with a spade than with a rifle, just then required a halt-



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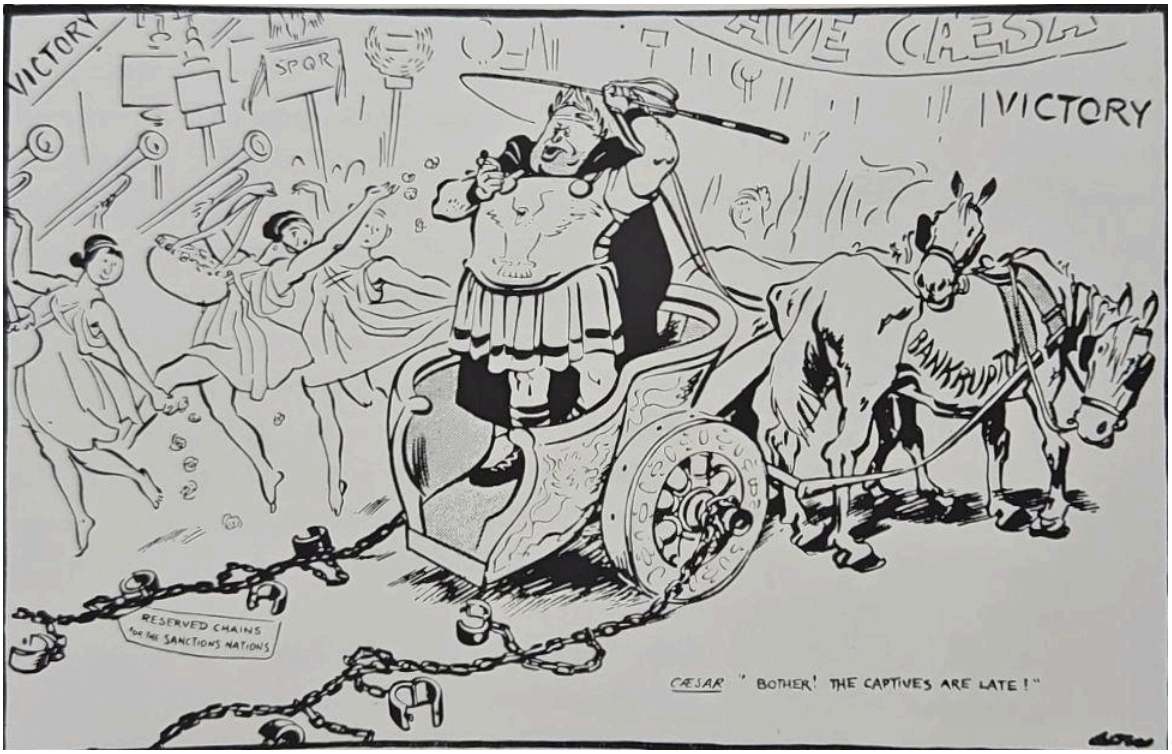
when the reports from Abyssinia reported attacks by the Italians, and then by the Abyssinians.



(140)

The bankruptcy was seen before Mussolini's triumphal chariot; the prisoners were late for the procession.

The League of Nations' War against Italy

"As a civilized person who also pays taxes, I would like to draw attention to a side of the Abyssinian question that is being overlooked in the current war mood.

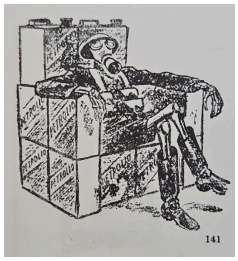
To make parts of the globe suitable for human habitation and for social development on a level above that of birds and mammals, the first necessary condition is a well-built and protected highway with water supply from artificial wells and gas stations. If the natives are wild, it is unfortunately necessary to convince them that the constructive forces of the road builders must be accompanied by destructive forces that make the power to impose order irresistible. England has done this kind of work all over the world, and in doing so created the British Empire and founded the United States of America. Spain did it in South America, Holland in the East Indies, and all the powers in Africa. Long before these things happened, Rome drew a fortified border wall from Newcastle to Carlisle and built roads in all directions from Rome…

Italy builds roads through Abyssinia with the express intention of colonizing it. The Danakil are doing their utmost to prevent this process, they are killing the road workers and their guards. The League of Nations is urgently requested by our Foreign Office, represented by Mr. Eden, to help the Danakil kill the Italians, to prevent the building of roads and to force the Italians to retreat, leaving the primitive tribes as victors over European civilization…

Since I might one day be a traveler or a merchant in these parts, I am not for the Danakil warrior but for the Italian engineer. Any policy that results in the taxes I pay being used to besiege and starve the engineer and to encourage, feed and arm the warrior seems to me to be an attack on our civilization, which, after all, can do more harm to our dangerously situated island than to Italy, which I do not wish to harm.

I also refuse to allow my money to be used to bribe the minority into agreement now that the attempt to achieve unanimity in Geneva has failed. I see no prospect of France agreeing to go to war against Italy for our sake if we can provoke Italy into shooting at us by means of unnecessary naval demonstrations in the Mediterranean. However old I am, I am not so pathetically feeble-minded as to believe that the modern practice of calling torpedoes, mines, blockades, sieges, battles, and bombs "sanctions" has so completely changed their nature that a vote for sanctions would be a vote for peace. Things have now changed so much that a vote for sanctions means a vote for a joint French and English attack on Italy. It would be far more reasonable and humane to throw the Geneva Council into the crater of Vesuvius. I hope that there is still enough common sense in England to drop the first alternative and to make the second unnecessary."

- **Letter from Bernard Shaw to the Times (Times, October 22nd, 1935)**



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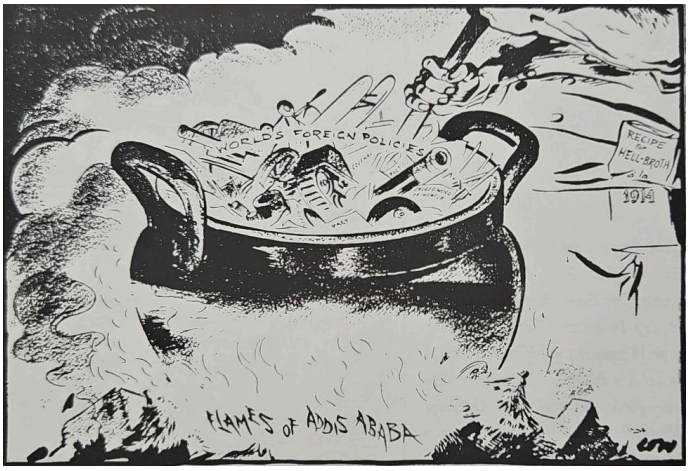
On October 7, the Council of the League of Nations adopted a report declaring that Italy had gone to war in violation of the obligations of the Covenant. This brought Article 16 of the Covenant into force. Article 16 is the Bible of collective peace and security. It contains a sentence stating that “any state which, in the judgment of the Council of the League of Nations, undertakes an attack against a member state, shall be deemed to have committed an act of war against all member states of the League of Nations.”; thus every armed conflict must become a world conflict; every fire must spread to a general conflagration; the city - in the words of Mussolini - must be set on fire if only one house catches fire. Article 16 requires member states to sever economic and financial relations with the aggressor state. Thus, the League of Nations powers implemented economic sanctions; the oil blockade, which would have had a potentially devastating effect on Italy, was almost used, had it not been for Italy's threat to regard it as a military measure and to respond with military means. Behind this economic blockade – as it would have been called in less ideological times – stood the constant threat of an actual bloody war. Mussolini said in an appeal to the students of Europe: “In the long run, the economic blockade must lead to a naval blockade, and the naval blockade is war.” Arrangements were made for the case that Italy would defend itself against the economic strangulation by force, and battle cruisers were on their way. England was gathering its home fleet in the Mediterranean. For this, military alliances were needed, not economic blockades, but “obligations to provide assistance in the event of an unprovoked attack when implementing preparatory measures for the fulfillment of Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant.”



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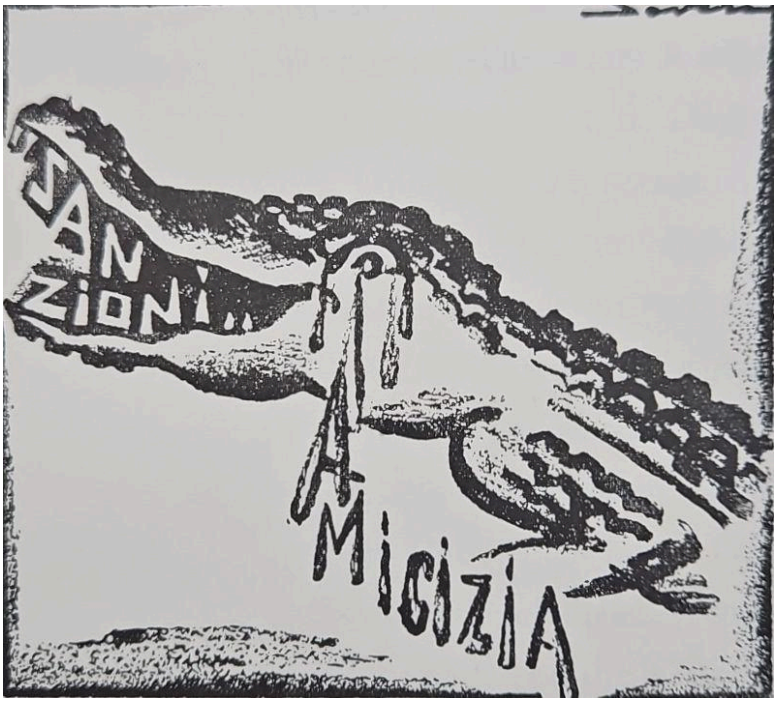
The impression of the English illustrator was shared by more than a few people that humanity should be served a meal à la 1914.



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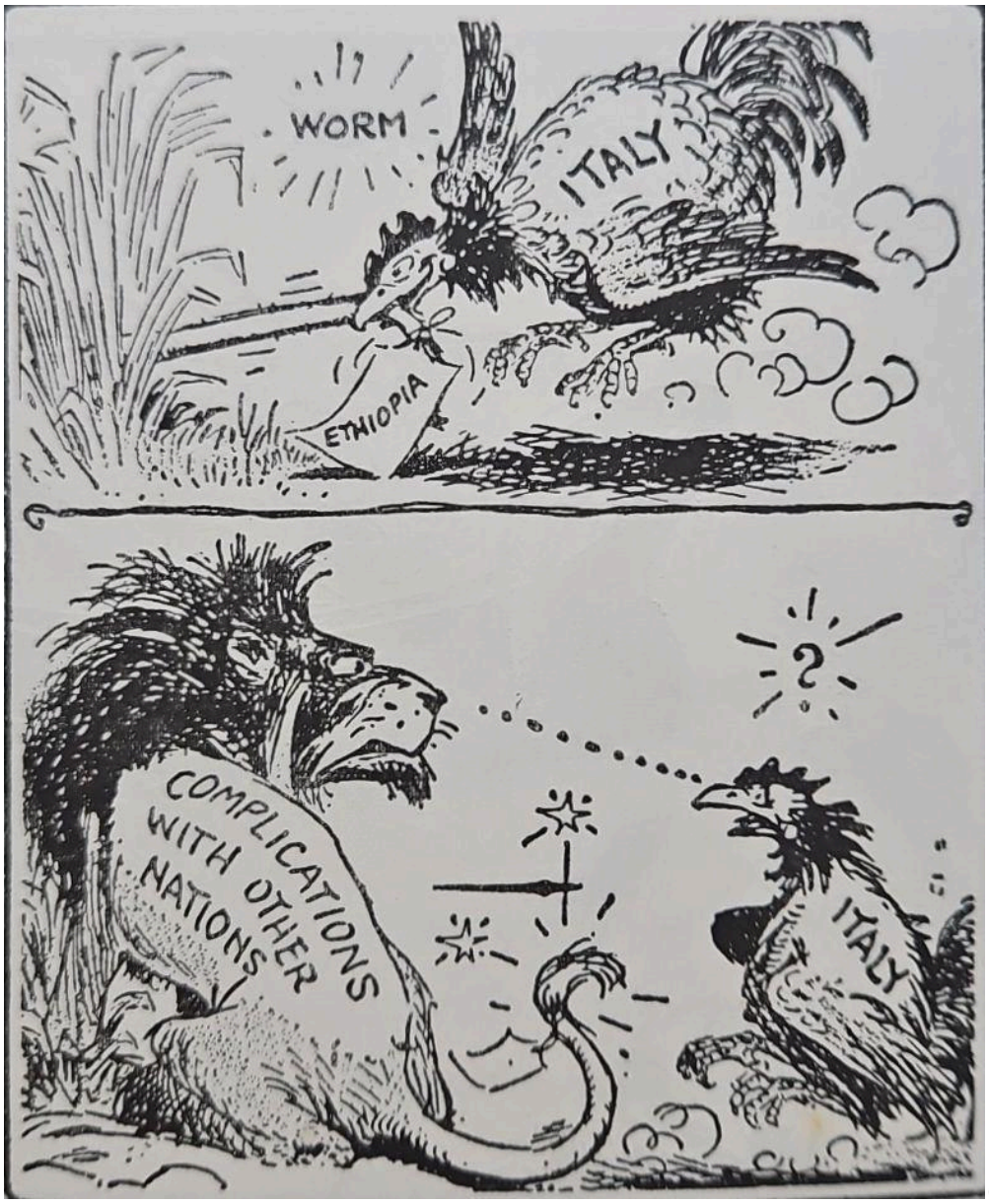
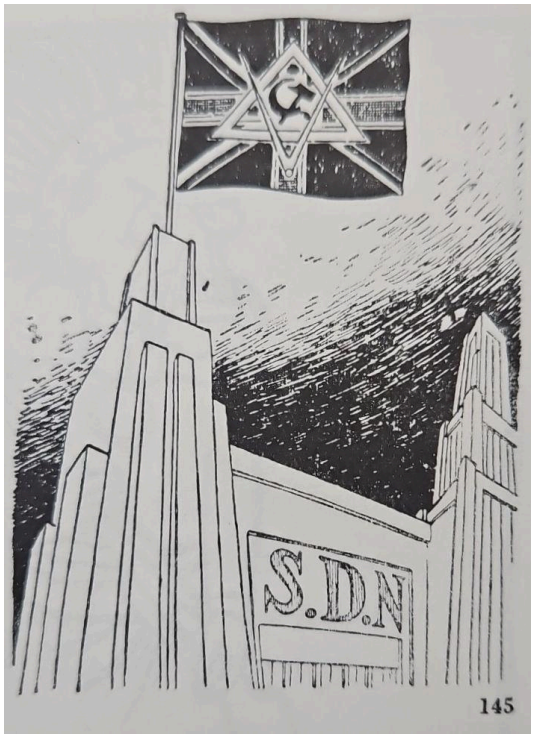
The League of Nations' war against Italy was always accompanied by assurances of friendship. The crocodile has, as the Italian cartoon said, teeth and tears.



(144)

In the beginning, the League of Nations emerged with an energy that surprised some. The widespread impression was that Italy, to its surprise, had reached into a wasps' nest or - to stick with the cartoonist's image - thought it was hacking at the worm of Abyssinia and hit the tail of a lion.



(145)

Soon a strange spectacle presented itself to the world - so-called "pacifism" had donned its armor to demand sanctions and ever more sanctions, right up to open military action. The flags of the great internationals (those of Freemasonry, those of Moscow) were hoisted on the League of Nations when the call was made to gather for the sanctions.

(146)

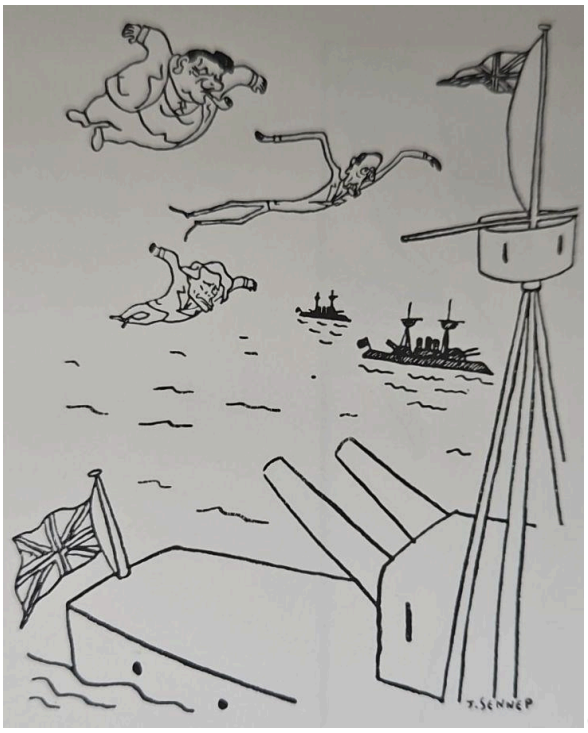
The English left (in the following picture the pacifist leader Cecil and the leader of the English Labor Party Attlee) pushed forward the English Foreign Minister Eden, when the sword of sanctions was already broken, while Baldwin covered his eyes from the terrible spectacle.

(147)

The French left was no less jubilant about the "Abyssinian War". Thus, in the caricature of France and Italy, the leaders of the left opposition like to appear in the finery of Abyssinian war chiefs. "Ras [Leon] Blum" was a leader of the crusade to save the Holy Land of Abyssinia and the Ark of the Covenant in Geneva.

(148)

The chiefs of the French left, Léon Blum and Herriot, in African war dress, push the reluctant soldiers into battle.



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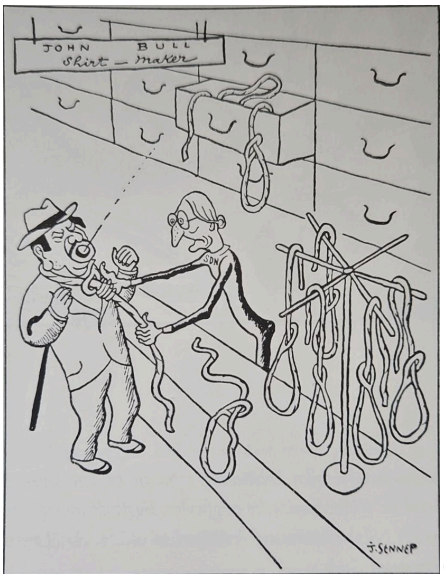
Blum, Herriot and Paul-Boncour, the French Minister for the League of Nations, flutter like seagulls behind the English fleet, which is marching in the Mediterranean for the sake of its global political interests.



(150)

At the same time, the French Foreign Minister, Laval, who always wears a white tie, receives his last white tie from Madame Völkerbund, delivered by John Bull, and is put to the sword (because his foreign policy collapsed due to the war against Italy).

(151)

Despite all bitterness against the faithless Latin sister, Italy perceived England as the most threatening enemy in the League of Nations. England's global political interests (for example at Lake Tana and at the source of the Nile) seemed to be at stake. At Lake Tana, the empire received an unexpected stab.

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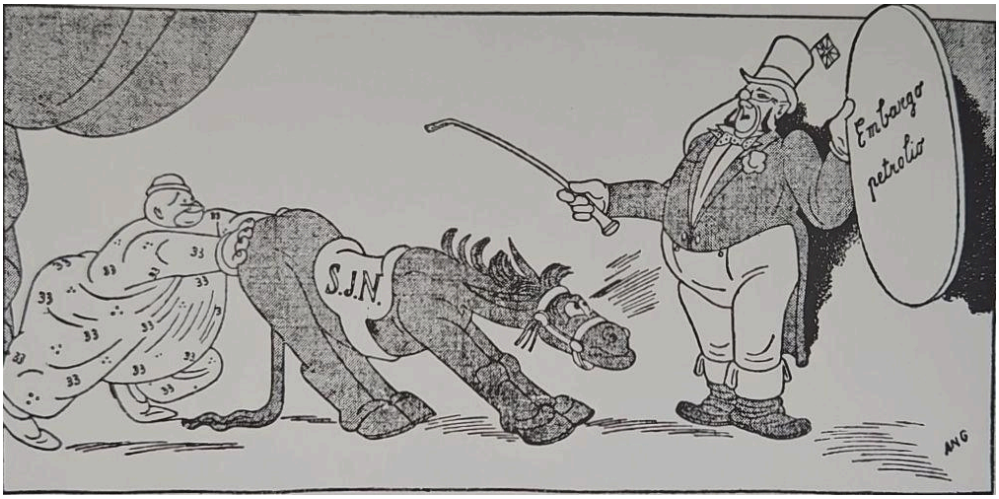
England, however, avoided speaking "on its own behalf" and referred to the League of Nations in all its actions, in its implementation as well as in the disclosure of the sanctions. In Italy, this assurance found little credence.



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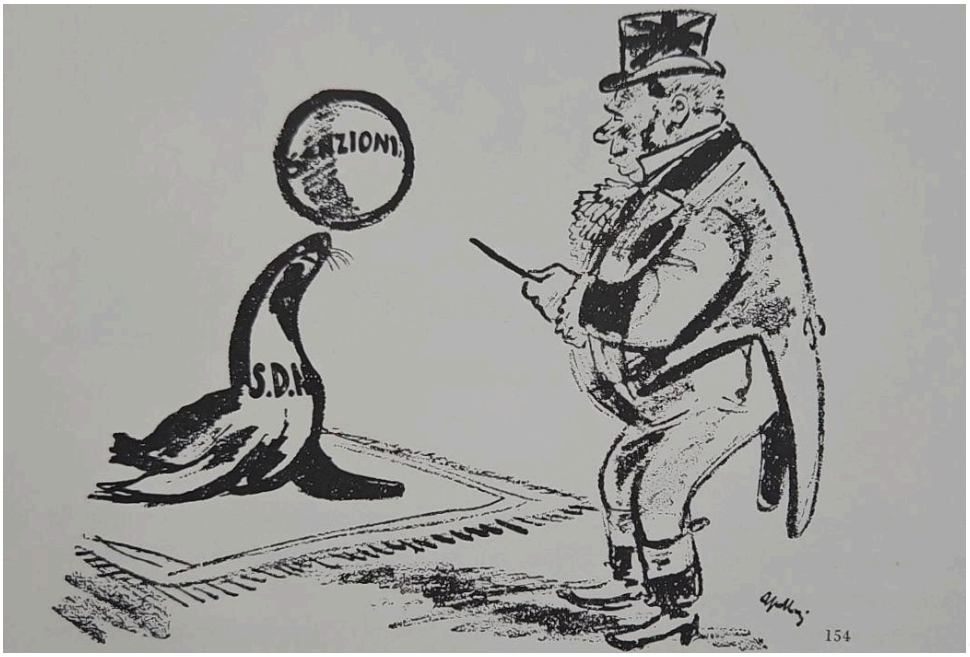
For a large part of Italian public opinion, Great Britain was the great director of the sanctions blockade. For Italy, it was Great Britain that tried to whip the League of Nations into action by means of the oil embargo.



(154)

According to Italy, England taught the League of Nations how to juggle the sanctions.

(155)

The British Foreign Secretary pleaded for leniency regarding the oil spill, while the serenade was played on oil containers.

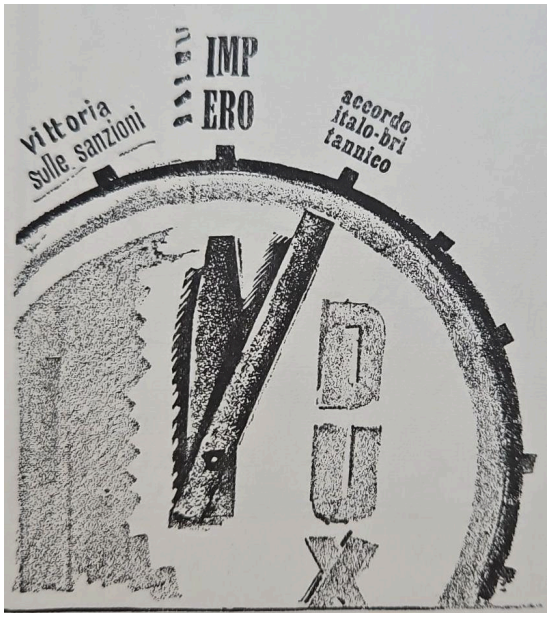
(156)

Great Britain was said to want to rule and pull the strings everywhere. Maps of Europe were drawn that reflected how John Bull wanted them to be.

(157)

When Abyssinia had collapsed, when the sanctions had been lifted, England and Italy, in the background of the terrible tragedy of the Spanish Civil War already taking place, virtually lifted the state of alarm on both sides in the Mediterranean by a gentleman's agreement.

The future must show whether the global political struggle between the old British Empire and the rising Italian Empire has already come to an end - whether the recall of the Home Fleet, which, incidentally, did not affect Britain's naval reinforcement in the Mediterranean, is a retreat by the British Empire, as the Italian cartoon depicts,



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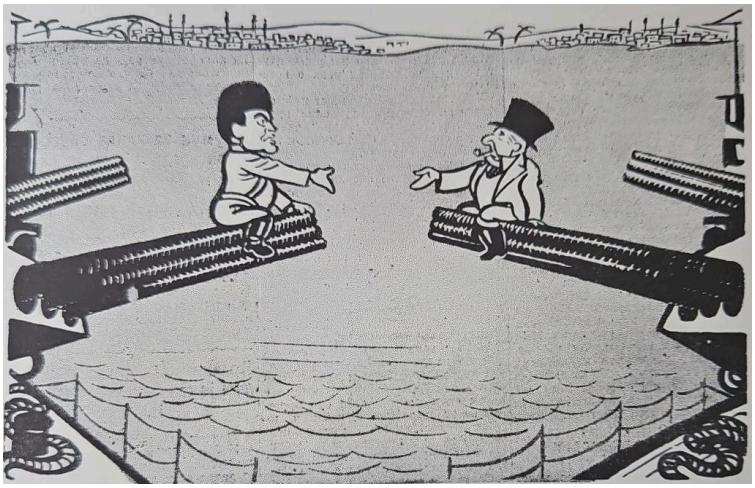
whether it has further advanced the hand on the global political clock of Italy,



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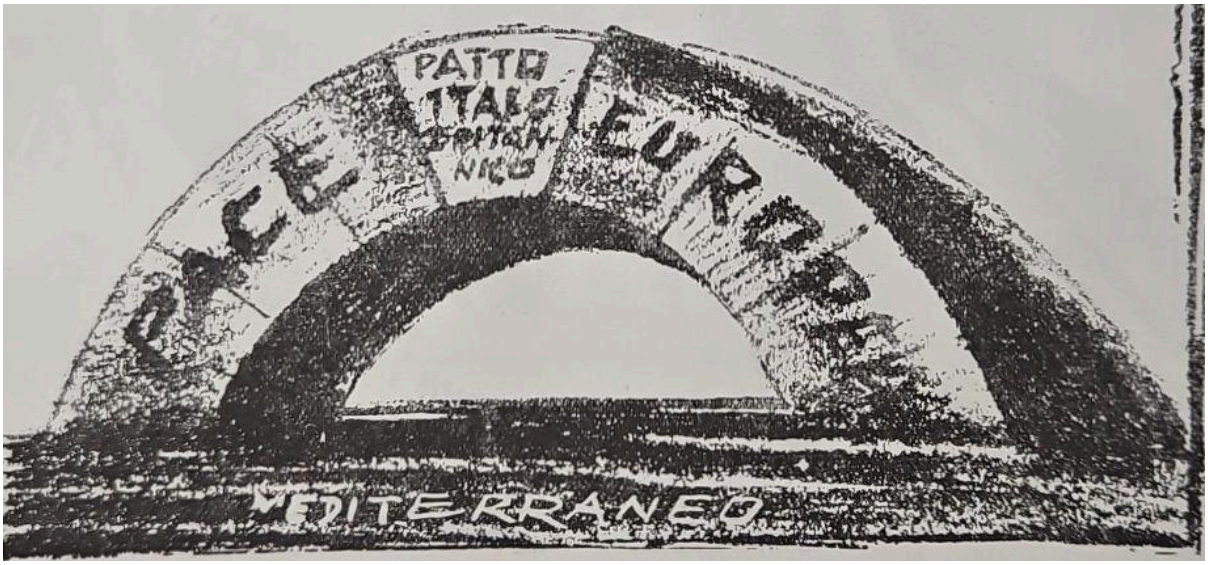
whether only powers shake hands on the barrels of loaded guns that can go off nearly anywhere, not just in Abyssinia,



(160)

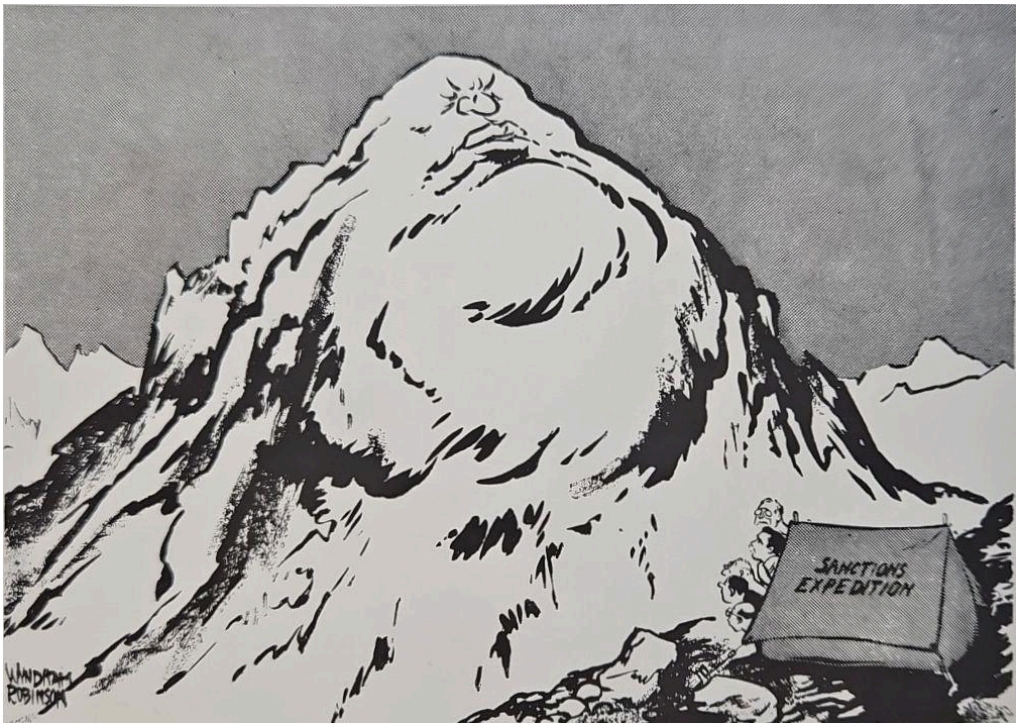
or whether a stable capstone has been placed on the dome of European peace.

Shipwreck of Sanctions

"The Assembly of the League of Nations...recognizes that various circumstances have prevented the full application of the Covenant of the League of Nations."

- Decision of the Assembly of the League of Nations of July 7th, 1936

The Abyssinian War soon became a race between the Italian armies in East Africa and the sanctions: the destruction of the Abyssinian army, the flight of the Negus, as well as the change in the European situation after the restoration of German sovereignty over the Rhineland, were decisive in the failure of those sanctions. The great world-historical experiment of the League of Nations to stand in the way of a determined nation through sanctions had failed.



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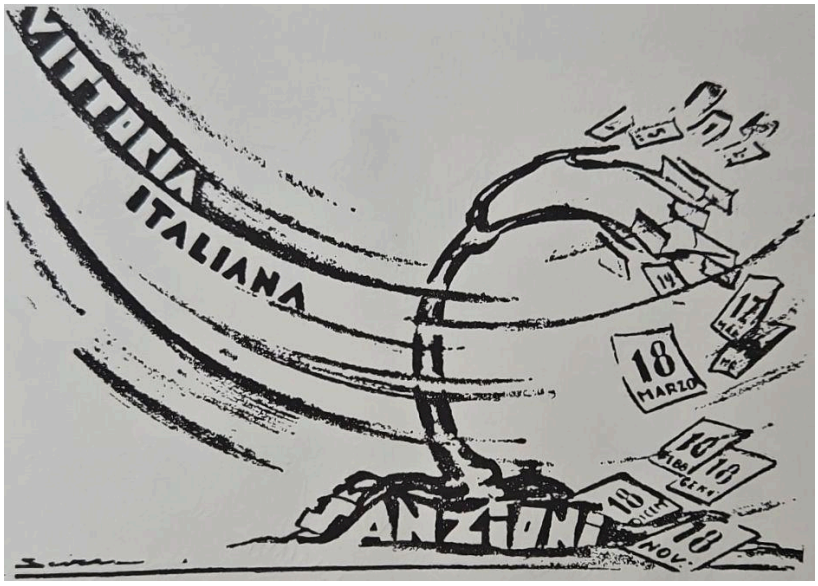
When news of the abandonment of the ascent of Mount Everest reached Europe, the abandonment of the ascent of the mountain of sanctions was also imminent.

(162)

The building of sanctions appeared like the Tower of Babel.

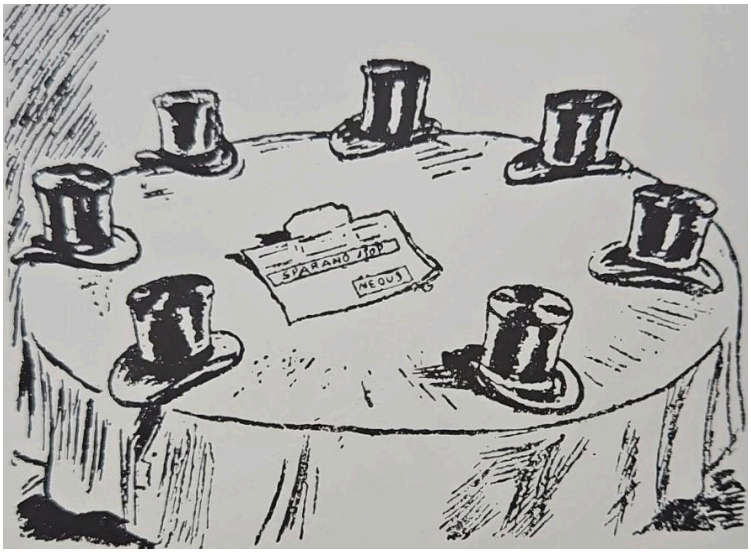


(163)

In the spring wind of the Italian victories, the sanctions tree was stripped of its leaves, and the big dates of the war of the League of Nations (especially November 18th, the beginning of the sanctions) were blown away like dead leaves in a storm.

(164)

Madame League of Nations was overcome with anxiety at the thought of November 18th, 1935, when the sanctions came into force.



(165)

They wanted to wage a "friendly war". When the Negus sent the telegram: "They are shooting", Geneva's "bombs" were not very fearsome, nor effective. In the sanctions committee of the League of Nations, the committee of eighteen, which was the subject of Italy's ridicule, there was much back and forth.

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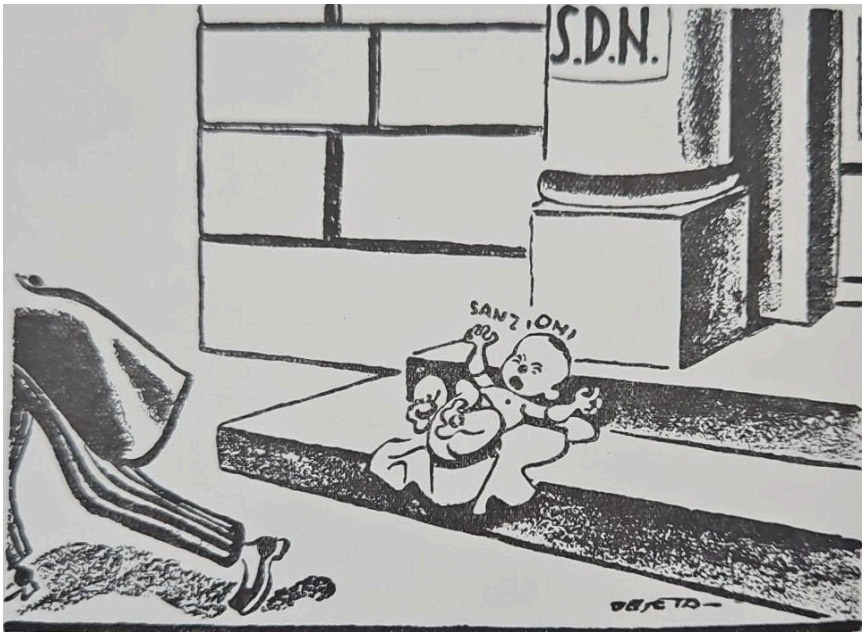
(167)

So, Italy ignored the League of Nations –

(168)

and was soon able to put a stop to the sanctions.



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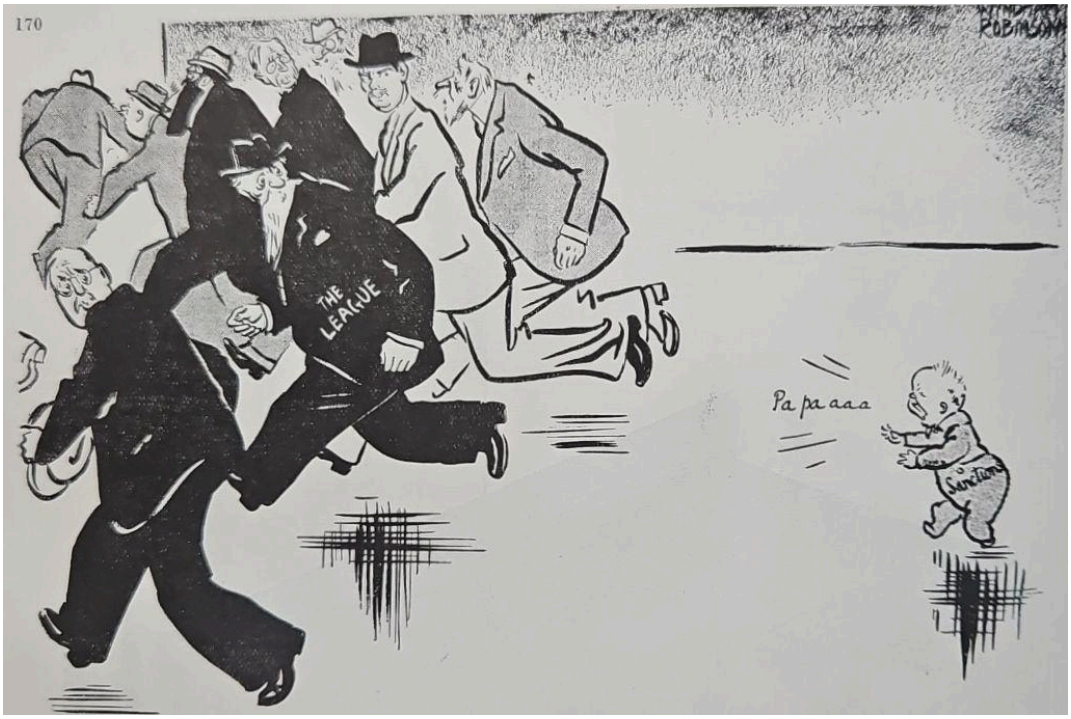
No one wanted to have been responsible for it. Like a child of sin, the sanctions were laid down in front of the League of Nations Palace.



(170)

The principle: "La recherche de la paternité est interdite" (The search for paternity is prohibited) gained some new supporters.

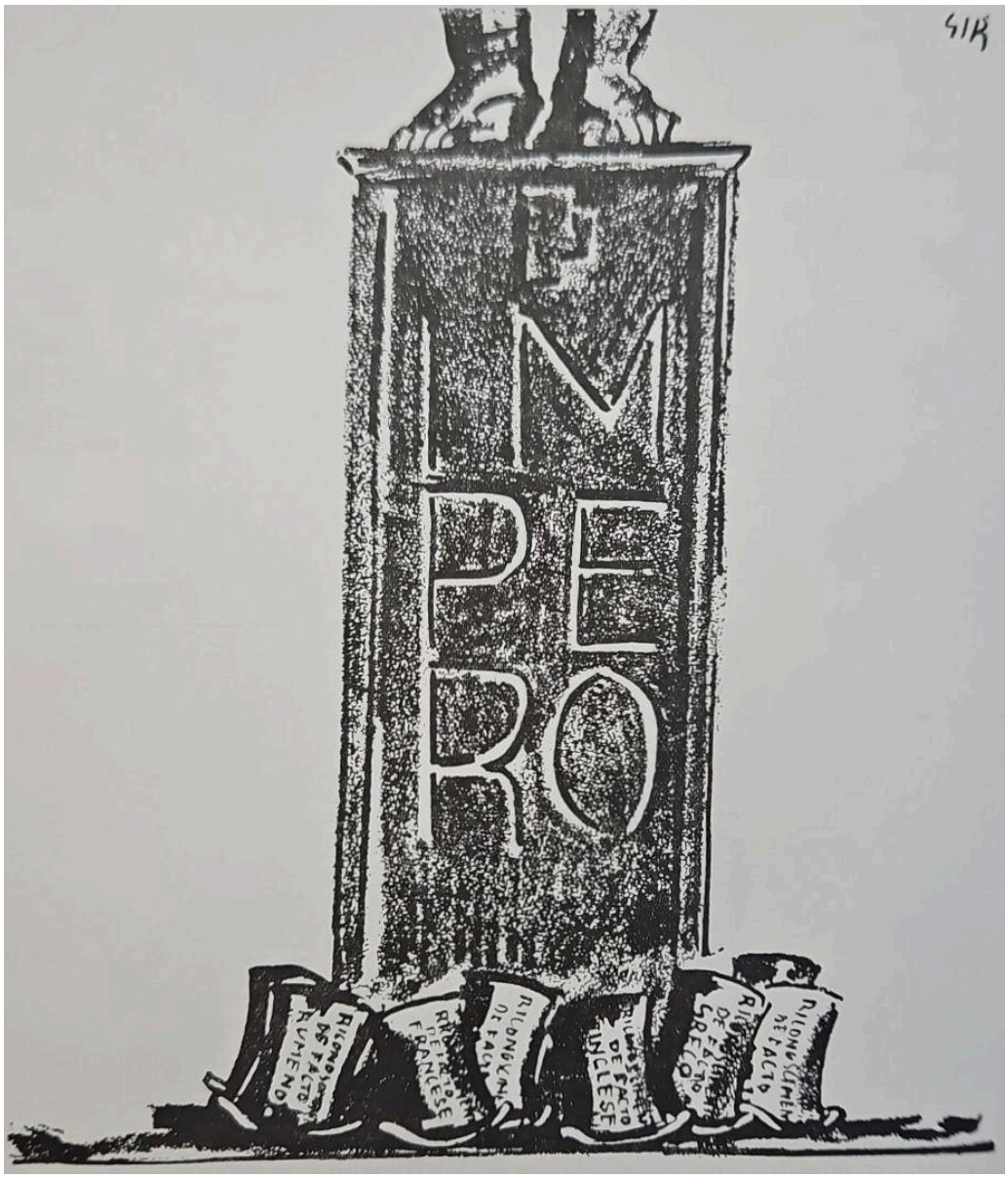
The sanctions were intended to give the League of Nations “teeth”. These teeth were quickly lost. Now, the reform of the League of Nations was preached by removing the sanctions from the League of Nations statutes.

(171)

The head of the college of nations, from which the students escape, calls out to the fugitives: “Stay, I'm abolishing the punishments!”

(172)

The supporters of collective security knew no less that the sanctions had missed their historic opportunity. To them, the failure of the sanctions seemed like the collapse of the international order. The last bus has left – says the English illustrator – only after the next world war will a new one come (a new chance for an international collective system).



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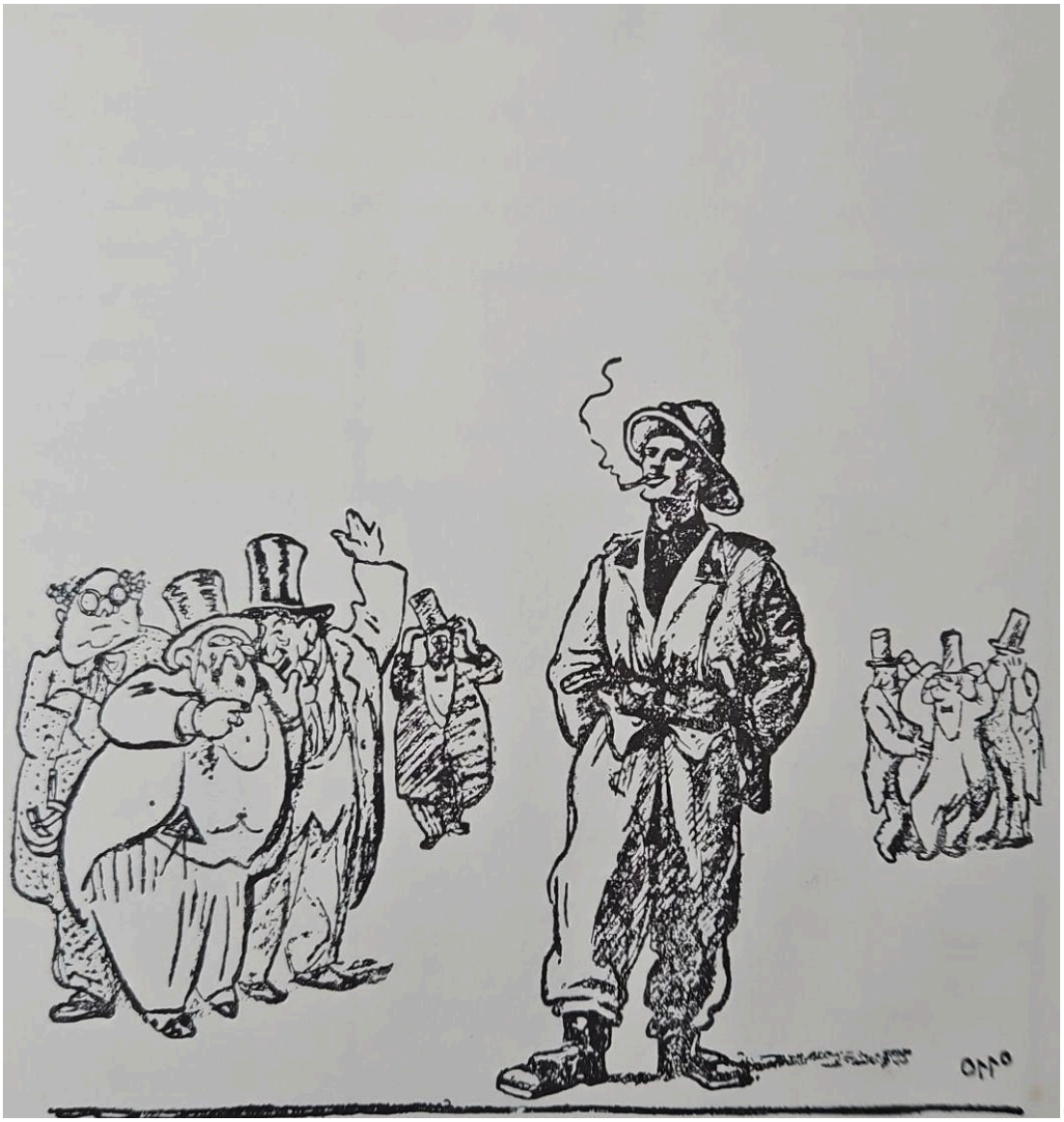
The end of all this was the more or less formal recognition of the Italian Empire of Abyssinia. With pillars on the ground, says the Italian caricature, everything was concluded.


(174)

The Abyssinian delegate in Geneva now looked quite different, as the Italian artists depicted him.

The Last Negus of Abyssinia

“The emperor's dignified speech evokes regret at the truth of the Roman proverb that not even the gods have power over the past.”

- The Times on the Negus's speech to the League of Nations

The dead ride fast. When Emperor Haile Selassie – now known to the Italians only as Signor Tafari – fled from Addis Ababa with the imperial treasure, he was quickly given the cup of bitterness, as are all those who fall from a high place. The world quickly turned to the new emperor of Abyssinia, the Italian king. Now the real rainy season had begun for the Negus.

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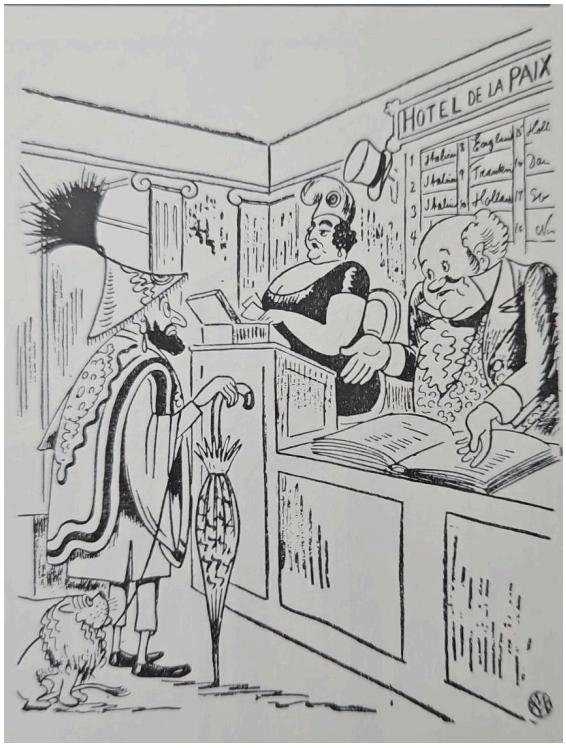


(176)

Like all those overthrown, the gates were quickly closed to him. At the Geneva League hotel, he found that everything was occupied-,

(177)

And had put up signs forbidding begging.

(178)

Above the Palace of the League of Nations, the Negus likened to read the words of Dante: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!"

(179)

The comfort that could be offered to him was little: it was not to be found on the throne made of gold chests that he took with him from Addis Ababa, on which the Italian caricature shows him,

(180)

or in the armchair in Geneva, which, in the League of Nations, is said in the above caricature to be better than a throne in Abyssinia.

The End of the Stresa Front

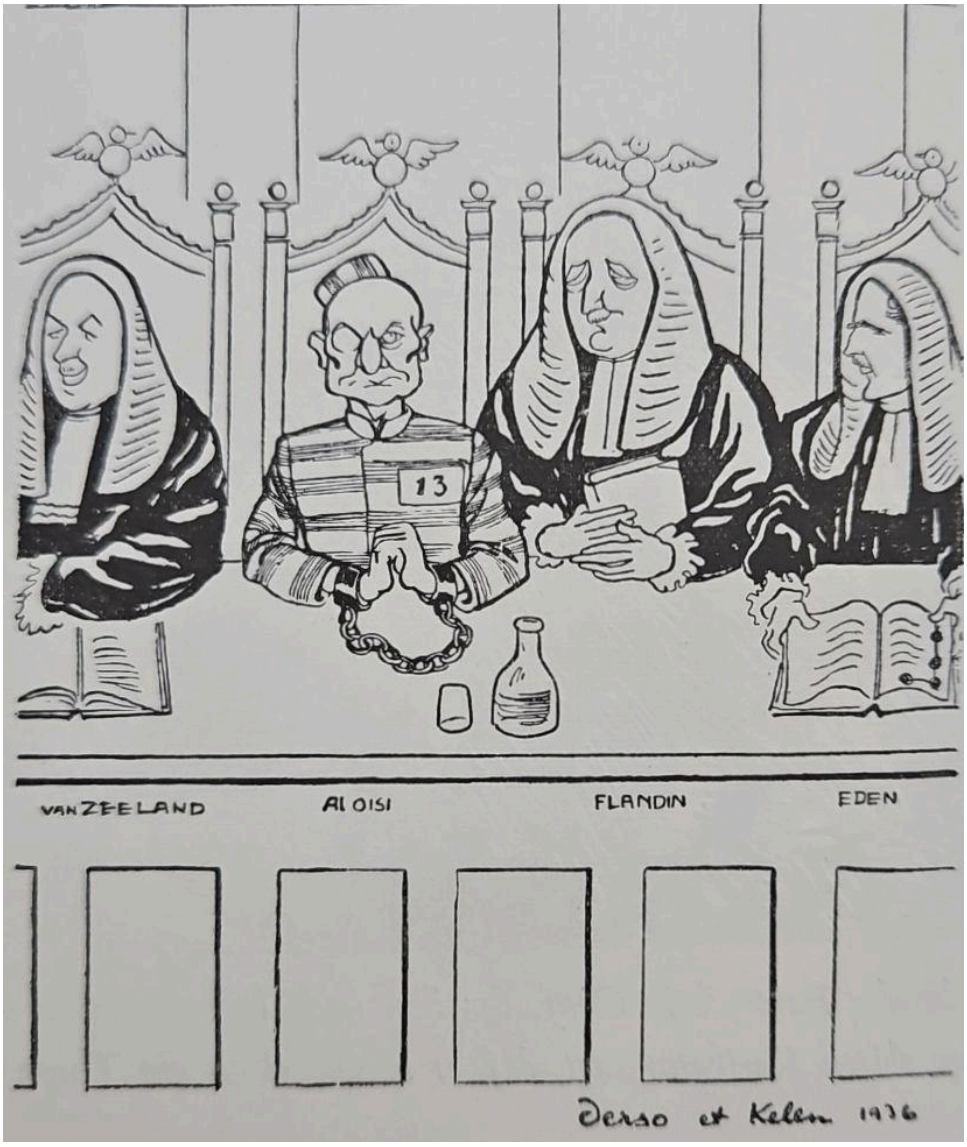
“We have not forgotten, nor will we forget.”
- Mussolini

After the game against Italy had been played and lost, France in particular had hoped to be able to lead Italy back into the so-called Stresa Front*, the concert of the Western powers, the League of Nations policy and the whole old European system. That was an illusion. After Italy's victory in Abyssinia, after the League of Nations' war of sanctions against Italy, and after the shaking off of the restrictions on German sovereignty, a return to the old Europe was no longer possible.

(181)

The bitterness had penetrated too deeply into the soul of the Italian nation. The Italian caricature shows the difference between 1915 and 1935.

* The Stresa Front was a coalition formed between Britain, France and Italy in April 1935 to halt German rearmament, reaffirm the Locarno Treaties, and to assure the independence of Austria. The Front fell apart with the Abyssinian Crisis, due to Italy’s belief that Britain and France would not interfere in colonial expansion.



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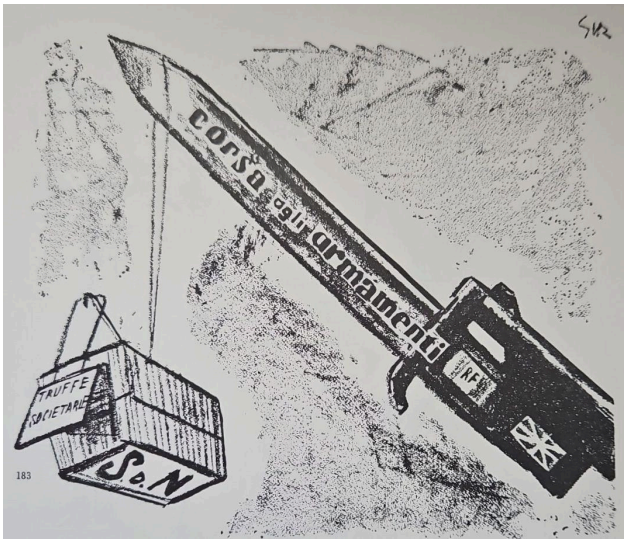
When, after the "march into the Rhineland", Italy, against which the sanctions were still in force, was to be given a role in the trial against Germany, Italy refused to play the role of judge and defendant at the same time. The "dual role" of the Italian representative of the League of Nations, Aloisi, was not played for long.



(183)

Italy had increasingly come to see the League of Nations' "pacifism" as a big trap.

On the Stresa Front, the Berlin-Rome axis has finally followed suit.

(184)

Italy saw - as this Dutch draughtsman displays - the fruit-bearing tree of the modern empire growing in place of the primitive barbarian slave state.

3. Tremors and Issues of the British Empire

“The most noble and powerful defense of the British Empire is the maintenance of peace.”
- The English White Paper, March 1st, 1935

“The British nation won its empire with the sharpness of the sword.”
- The Commander of the British Army in India [General Sir Kenneth Wigram], on September 5th, 1934

Tremors and Issues of the British Empire

"We want to pray that the Crown, this great symbol of our race and our unity, may endure forever over the world with the Constitution of England. It is a bond that, once broken, can never be re-established. So long as this tradition lasts, to which we are all accustomed, as our fathers before us were, this tradition that inspires England's rulers, so long will our country be blessed, and no power in the world will ever be able to break it. Yesterday, as we debated the current political situation in the House of Commons, I was reminded of how much depends on keeping the Empire, the Indian Empire, and ourselves together. After all, this vast area, which probably makes up a quarter of the earth, remains at peace, and we know that no matter what happens in Europe, peace will prevail in this empire and within its borders as long as it remains united."

- Stanley Baldwin, May 3rd, 1935

(185)

When Lord Curzon took the floor of the House of Lords on November 18th, 1918, to celebrate the armistice, he joyfully proclaimed: "Never has the British flag flown over a more powerful and united empire... Never has our voice carried more weight in the council of nations and in determining the future destiny of mankind." His biographer, Harold Nicolson, says that at the end of 1918, the British Empire indeed had every reason to be confident: the alliances with France, Belgium and Italy still existed; the German fleet was destroyed; the German colonies laid as prey to the victors. The Ottoman Empire was lying in tatters on the ground; its capital cities were at the mercy of the guns of the English fleet. Naval supremacy was in the undisputed possession of the British Empire. The Bolshevik experiment, with its terrible dangers for British rule in Asia, was on the verge of collapse. "Triumphant in Europe and Africa, we held the keys of Asia in our hands. Never had a victory been so comprehensive, so overwhelming, so absolute. We possessed a material superiority such as had not been known since the days of Hadrian or Alexander. We seemed to be the masters of the world."

Lord Curzon himself lived to see the beginning of the collapse of this formidable position of power. The British Empire now shares control of the seas with the United States. On the continent, France achieved a

level of supremacy that the British Empire would never have tolerated in the days of its unbroken will to power. The German Reich finally rebelled against the dictates of docility that England, together with a measured amount of indulgent goodwill and friendly support, had administered to Germany throughout the post-war years. Italy finally withdrew from the orbit of British politics with the Abyssinian War. The dominions successfully demanded complete internal autonomy and independence in foreign affairs, and they achieved equal rights with the mother country. In some British dominions there is talk of the right to neutrality in the event of Britain going to war - that is, the right to watch with folded arms as the mother country faces the great tests of world history. In Ireland, Egypt and India, national movements worked and are working on open or covert rebellion against the empire.

Many therefore believe they can hear the death knell when they put their ear to the structure of the British Empire. But the British Empire has often enough shown the strength to renew itself and the ability to assert itself in the changing times throughout its centuries of history. It dislikes contrived systems and does not seek to “make” its way of life, but to “let it grow”; thus it has always communed with the maidens of the dawn and of tomorrow. The great minds of its monarchy have borne mighty demonstrations of the British imperial idea. So the British Empire still stands before us as a majestic force in the world of today.

All About the Empire

The tour around the British Empire is a tour around the world; the English illustrator shall guide us through his empire and its problems.

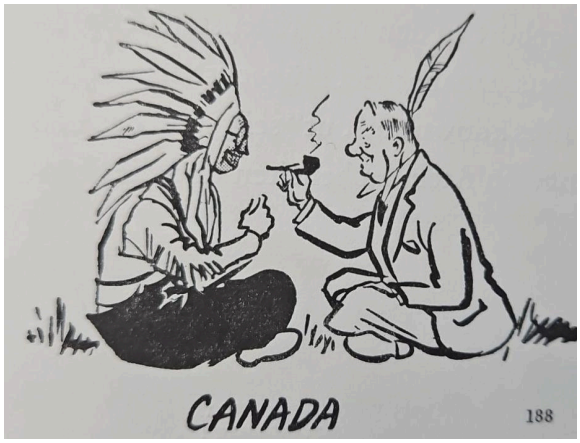
(186)

In India, the Secretary of State, Sir Samuel Hoare, travels majestically through the country. He has an enormous task ahead of him: to give a country of four hundred million people a constitution, to maintain order in a veritable continent into which history has poured races and religions in a fantastic jumble, and to fight against the ever-smoldering revolutionary rebellion. The Indian elephant does not always walk so calmly.

(187)

In South Africa, the Home Secretary Sir John Simon visits a "Negro Kraal*". In fact, the "Negro Kraal" is at the center of South African politics. The South African Union wants to arm itself against the danger of a militarized black Africa. In its political dreams, it sees itself as the center of a southern and central African union that has re-established the rule of the white man in Africa through a unified native policy: "A few centuries ago," said Defense Minister [Oswald] Pirow on November 5th, 1935, "the Cape of Good Hope became the gateway to the Far East. It is possible that it will once again become the gateway to the East. It is possible – and it is incomparably worse – that one day it will become the gateway to the West."

*A "kraal" is a traditional African village or homestead.

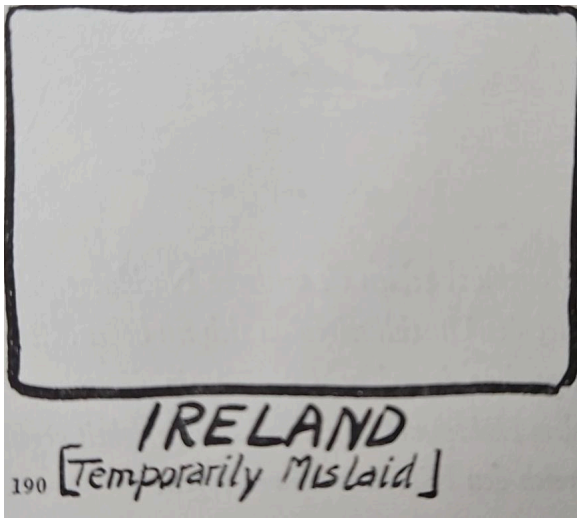


(188)

The Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, may smoke the pipe of peace with an Indian on the Canadian prairie. Canada's problems are indeed those of the American continent; the "Indian" and the struggle with him have also played no small role in its history. But in spite of all the ties which connect it to its big American brother, making it a bridge between the British Empire and the United States, it is perhaps the dominion most loyal to the mother country, and nowhere in the world can the British statesman smoke the pipe of peace with such unalloyed pleasure.

(189)

The picture in Australia is also peaceful, where the Lord President of the Council, Mr. [Ramsey] MacDonald, practices his effusive eloquence, which is exuberant for English tastes, among flocks of sheep. The prosaic question of cattle exports largely fills the conversations between the mother country and the dominion. Touched by the waves of the great current of Japanese expansion, with vast unsettled areas that lie as a great temptation before the Asian world, passionately fighting to remain "the white man's land", Australia is also overshadowed by more formidable problems. Over the idyll of wandering cattle herds and MacDonald's pious rhetoric, clouds of world struggle sometimes loom.



(190)

The cartoonist believes that the image of Ireland has been temporarily displaced. Here is an old republican, [Éamon de] Valera, in power; he does everything to make the English crown a mere

shadow. In 1934, he said of one of his laws that not a single line of it would need to be changed if a republic were declared in Ireland.

Rise or Decline?

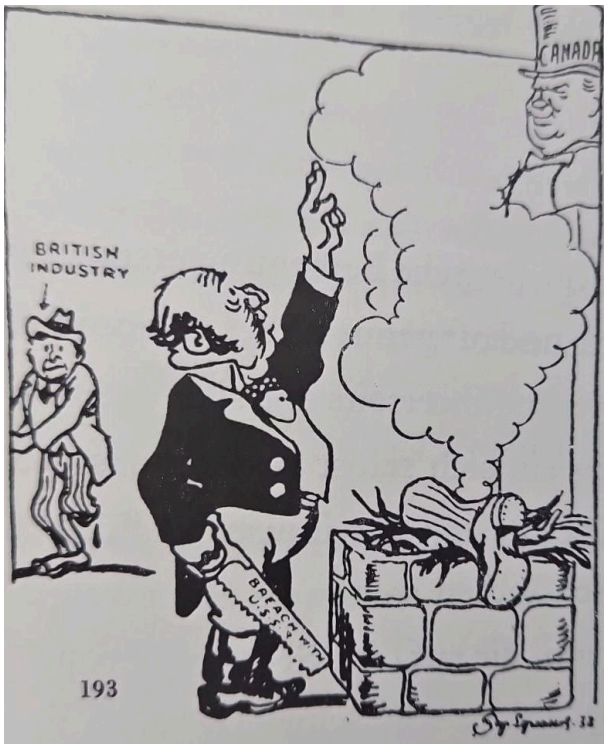
The horoscope of the British Empire is one of the most controversial in the field of political astrology, which is usually much wiser after the event than it was before. The judgment that it is over for England (or,"down and out") is countered by the English art of keeping its breath and waiting for the hour.

(191)

Sometimes British post-war policy seemed to have an infinite amount of indecisiveness about it. "I wanted something from somewhere!", a German cartoonist has the British lion say at the height of British complacency towards France.

(192)

The statesmanship of the British Empire seemed to be in decline. The caricaturist's criticism dwells on comparison with the figures of old British imperial politics - the English draughtsman juxtaposes the past and dreams of the future with the present under Sir Austen Chamberlain, the heir and son of Joseph Chamberlain, the reviver of the British imperial idea.



(193) (194)

In political prophecy there was a confused jumble of voices. The triumphant scorn of the Soviet Russian cartoonists are shown here (betraying the hopes of unbreakable enmity) - through the Ottawa Treaty (which established the "imperial preference", the mutual favor of the members of the British Empire in foreign trade) Britain maims its own industry in order to offer a burnt offering to Canada; meanwhile, the British lion walks about with its autonomous dominions, with splintering stitches.

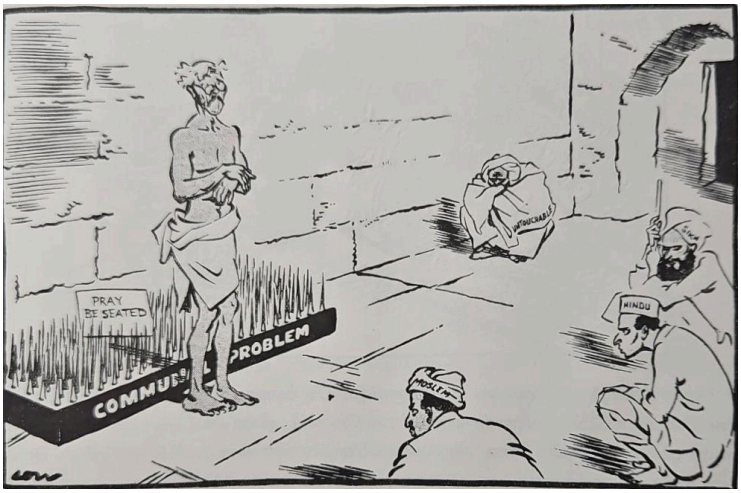
(195)

The London cartoonist asks himself - will the sleeping titan, which the Lilliputians want to tie up with the threads of pacts (not least the great Eastern Pact given with honor to the Soviet Union), awaken with new strength and shake off all the paralyzing influences? Will the impression ultimately be that the attempt was to catch eagles with spiderwebs?

The Battle for India

"What have we taught India for a hundred years? What have we promised the Indians? We have preached English institutions, democracy and all the rest. We have shouted it in India's ear. We have taught it this doctrine, and India now demands that we should foot the bill, to some extent."
- Stanley Baldwin, December 4th, 1934

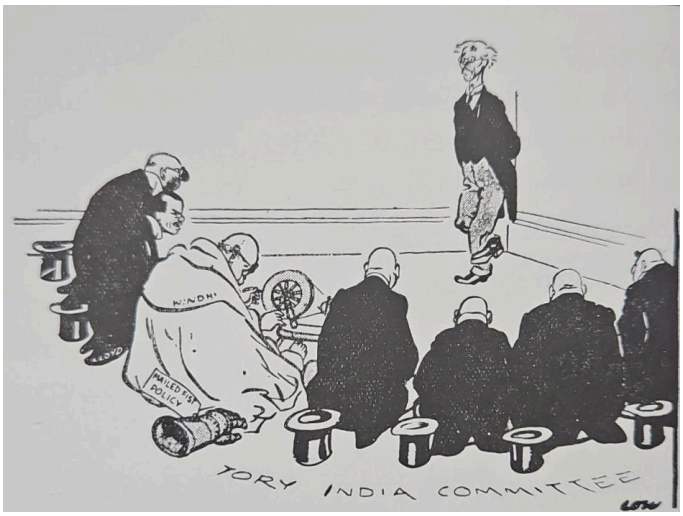
After the end of the war, a nationalist movement arose in India that demanded independence. The English government, for its part, has committed itself to gradually developing India into a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. The states of the Indian princes and British India, which is directly administered by England, should merge into a huge All-Indian Federation, based on the "self-government" of the Indian people. But there are many obstacles in the way of this attempt to create a home for British ideals in India. Races and religions are still divided by abysses; for millions of Indians, it is still a mortal sin to even sit at the table with people of a different faith. For hundreds of millions of their fellow citizens, sixty million "untouchables" are an "impure caste". India itself has not yet been satisfied with all of England's concessions, and its appetite has grown with eating. In England, on the other hand, there is strong opposition in the conservative camp to a policy that, in the opinion of this opposition, is betraying the Indian masses, who need the capable British administration like their daily bread, for the sake of a noisy clique of Indian politicians. The sound of the death knell for the British Empire in Asia may be heard mingling with the cheers for India's new constitution, to quote Churchill. The Labour Party, together with the Indian nationalist movement, has been calling for more and more concessions for India. Thus a mighty struggle for the fate of a continent and the struggle between intellectual world powers had broken out.



(196)

The Indian question was a heavy burden for English politics at all levels. In 1932, the English government had to arbitrate between India's religious communities on the distribution of seats in

public bodies (the "Communal Award"). The response to their ruling was a storm of protest from all sides. The illustrator shows the British Prime Minister MacDonald as a new fakir on the bed of thorns of this arbitration, while Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and "untouchables" lurk suspiciously.

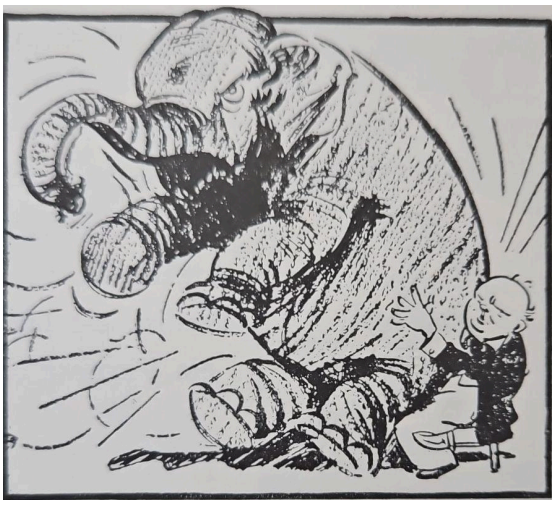


(197)

The difficulties came from both within and without. The MacDonald government had suffered no little from the Mahatmas and from the Conservative opposition led by Winston Churchill, who had a great deal of influence in the Conservative Party's India Committee.

(198)

While Gandhi was promoting the movement of civil disobedience, there was also a case of this disobedience in England. Winston Churchill sat on the tracks of the tramway that was supposed to lead to the "Indian utopia", and the traffic policeman Baldwin had a hard time getting the tramway cleared again.

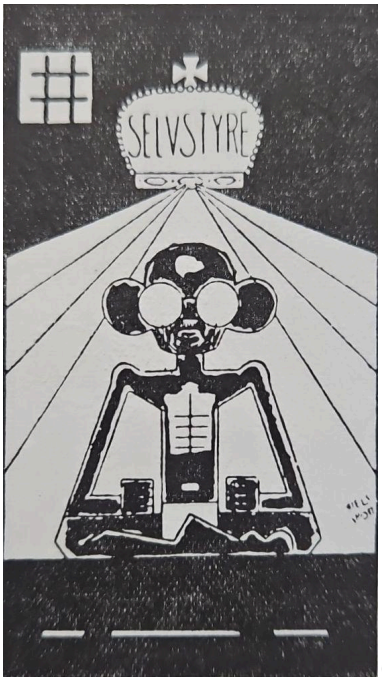

(199)

Supporters of a policy of accommodation with India, on the other hand, gave a mocking illustration of Churchill's slogan: "We must keep India."

(200)

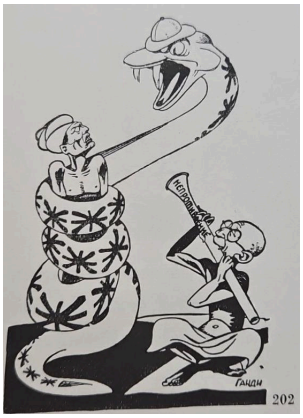
Winston Churchill and his group considered their position justified when, after the new constitution came into force in India, the Indian Congress movement sabotaged the new plan by all means. Drunk on the democratic ideas in which he wallowed, the Indian elephant is giving a vigorous lesson to its teacher in democratic politics, the "mother of parliaments". The manual "How to Treat Animals" does not seem to be quite enough.

Mahatma Gandhi



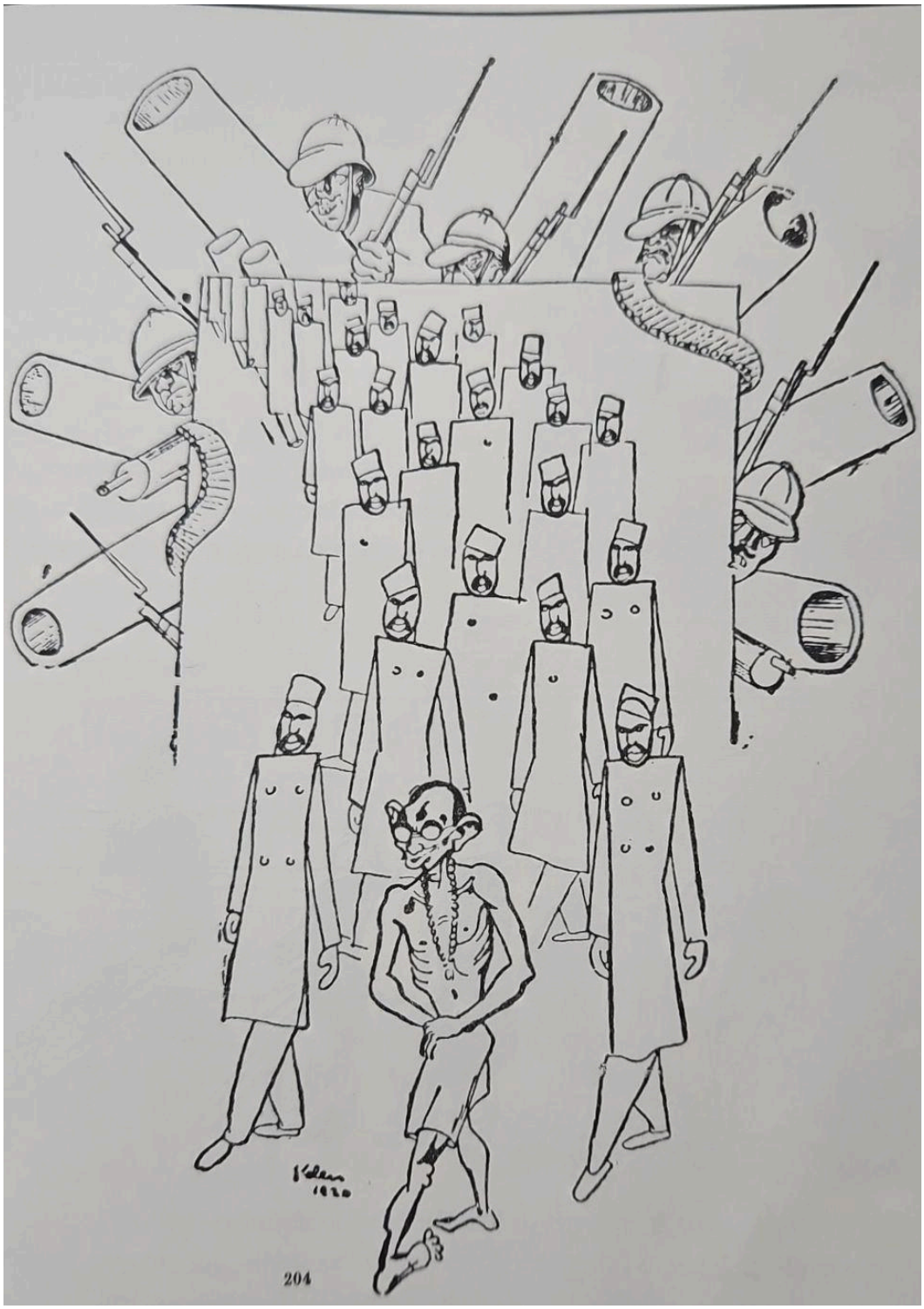
(201)

The colorful figure of Mahatma Gandhi stands above the nationalist movement. He appears as an ascetic and a saint. He preaches “non-violence,” the overcoming of foreign domination through non-obedience and non-resistance. But this saint is also a great Machiavellian, a master of the enigmatic intrigue and a virtuoso of political tactics.



(202)(203)

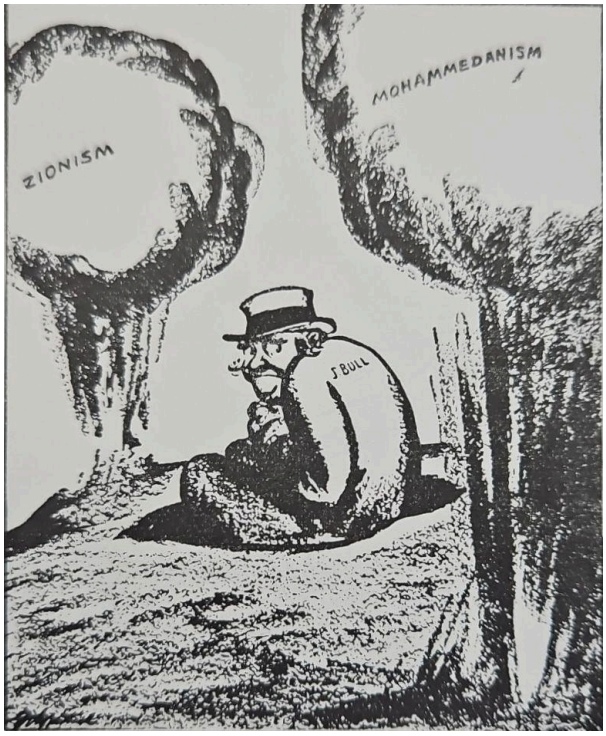
The Soviet Russian worshippers of political terror, who are fomenting the unrest everywhere in India and who, through the Indian revolutionary movement, always want to keep their hands on the throat of the British Empire, have poured venomous contempt on Gandhi's ideal of non-violence. He wants to charm the poisonous snake of English rule with flutes, and believes he could tame the British lion by sprinkling a little salt of "non-violent resistance" on its tail.



(204)

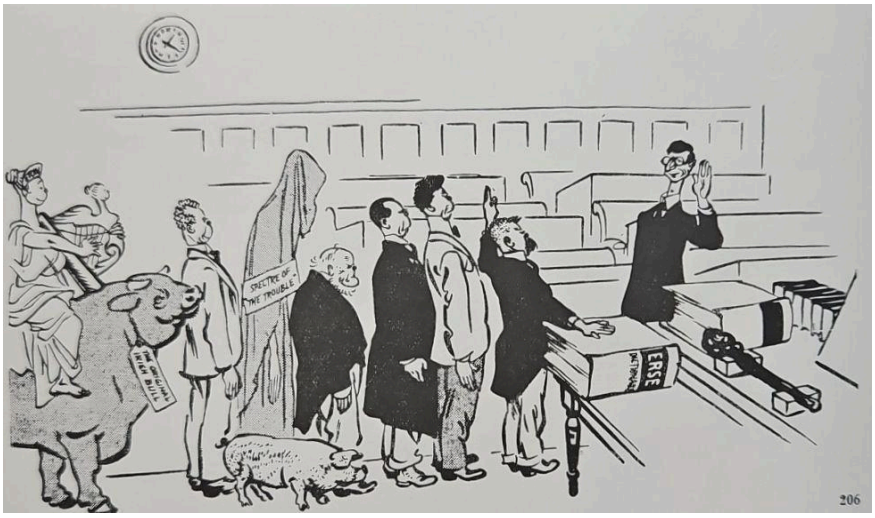
There is something mysterious, intangible, fantastic about "Gandhi going to war".

The tour of the British Empire that we embarked on on page 114 can be criticized even further.



(205)

John Bull sits in Palestine as a mandate power, looking after the "Jewish National Home" and creating a bridge for himself to India: he sits between the terrible struggle waged by Arabs and Jews.

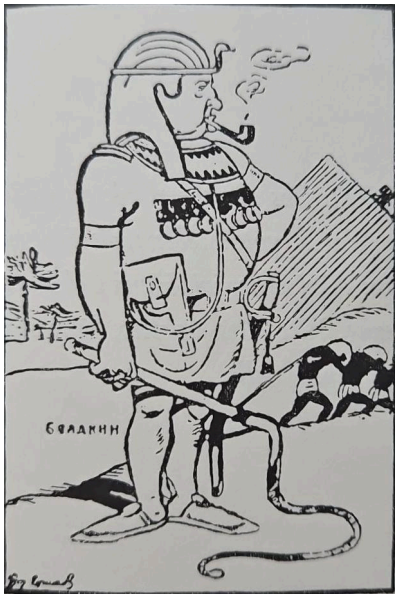


(206)

The picture of Ireland, which was "temporarily misplaced" on page 115, can be seen here: In Ireland, every effort is being made to loosen the ties that bind Ireland to the English crown; President de Valera makes the deputies swear an oath on the Gaelic dictionary to recognize the King of Great Britain, but under no circumstances to have anything to do with King George V.

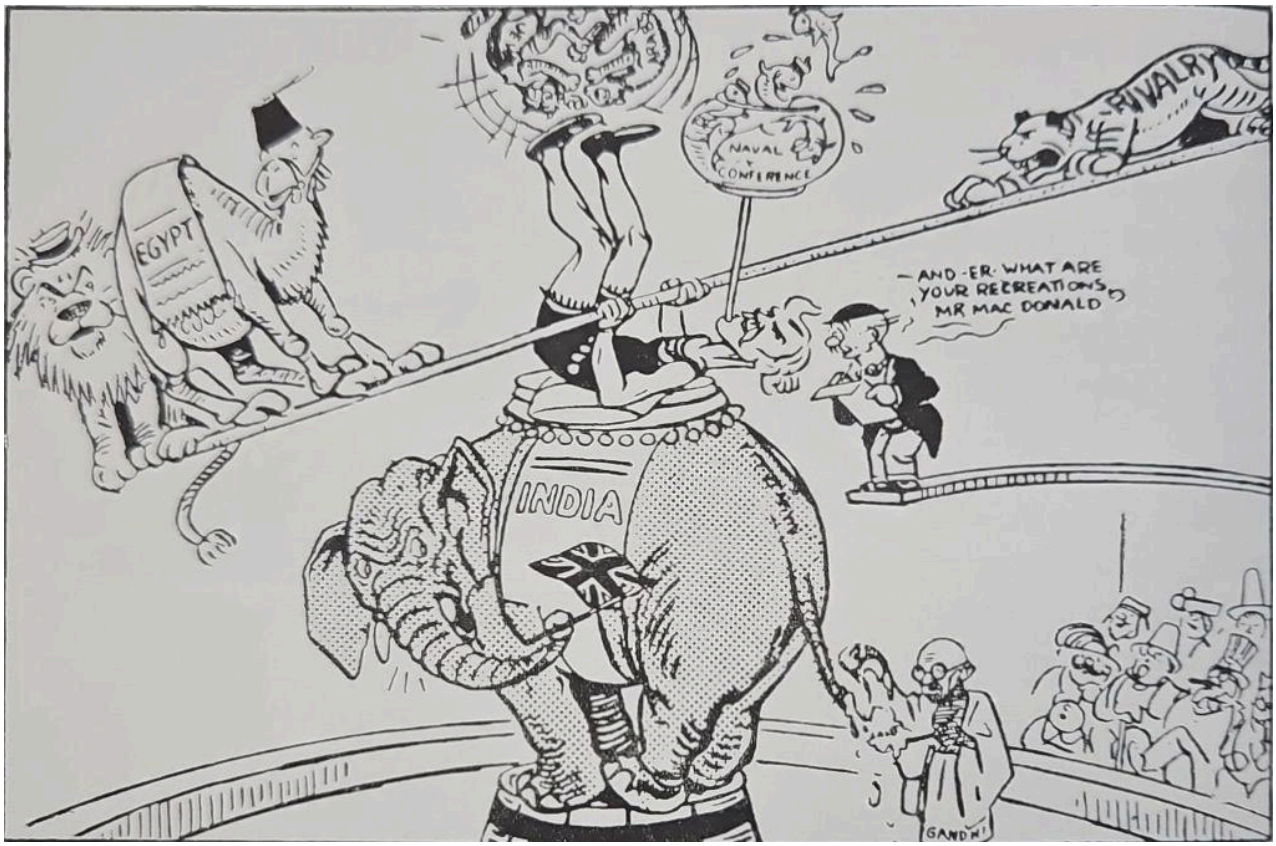
(207)

In Egypt, a nationalist movement fought against the British Empire after the World War. For a long time, it seemed to be an illusion to want to keep Egypt through a friendship pact instead of through troops. It was mockery when an Australian caricature had MacDonald say to the English occupation army in Egypt: "You can go; I've got him now."



(208)(209)

Bolshevism was stirring up trouble, inciting the people by depicting the "new pharaohs" (Baldwin I). Finally, in 1936, Great Britain and Egypt concluded a friendship pact and were able to exchange a brotherly kiss, however strange it may have seemed.



(210)

Sometimes, governing the British Empire seems like a great acrobatic feat. The Indian question, the Egypt problem, the Naval Conference, Palestine itself, where Jews and Arabs live with each other like

cats and dogs, all provide enough material for concern. Those who master all of this would be entitled to grateful applause when the curtain falls.

4. The Politics of the Americans

The Politics of the Americas

"Many causes produce war. There are ancient hatreds, unsettled frontiers, "the legacy of old, forgotten, distant things and long-gone battles." There are new-born fanaticisms, convictions on the part of certain people that they alone hold the final truth and are in the right. A dark old world was ravaged by wars between hostile religions. A dark modern world faces the war of opposing economic and political fanaticisms, into which hatred between races has degenerated."

- [Theodore] Roosevelt in his speech at Chautauqua on August 14th, 1936

"America, you have it better than our continent, the old one..."* - that is a belief that Americans themselves like to repeat. It is a foundational belief: the United States was founded by people fleeing the 'dark continent', the 'black continent' of power struggles and nation states. The states of Europe are driven to eternal war against each other by dynastic ambition, the pursuit of power, racial prejudice, ethnic hatred, the memory of distant things that resonate from dark times, the memory of long-forgotten battles. The peace of the "Western world," the "good neighborliness" of the hemisphere of the United States rises above the darkness of the old continent like the rays of the sun of a new life.

The big, exciting question now facing the United States is: Can we keep out of the world struggle, or will we be engulfed in it? The experience of the world war, "when America went to war", is still fresh in the memory. If America is to defend the "high seas", then the question – i.e. the right to deliver war with the constant threat of involvement in the war once it has begun, if one belligerent wants to prevent the military provisioning of the other –must be answered. Should the United States simply let world conflicts "burn out," keeping itself at a distance and erecting a firewall around itself? Should it participate in the solution (the problem of participation in the League of Nations and similar questions), or even in a "world regiment" that establishes "order and peace" in the world?

All these questions will determine which side of the scales the one half of the globe will lie on in the struggle between the world powers.

*Said by van Goethe, Almanac for the Muses (1831)

(211)

"Can we keep our distance?", America asks herself. It is the most important question facing her destiny. Can she stand aside when the wars of armed struggle or economic chaos break out, or will the mountain not come to Mohammed this time?*

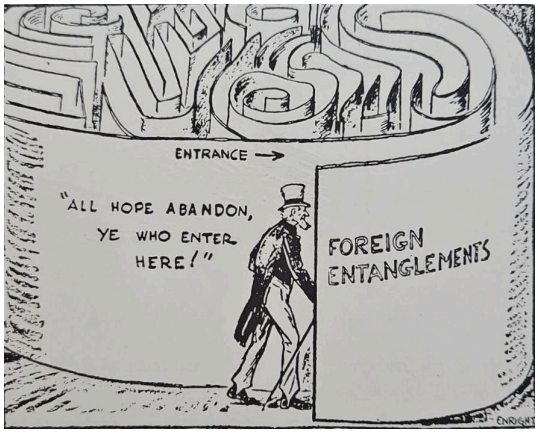
*“If the Mountain won’t go to Mohammed, then Mohammed must come to the Mountain” is an old proverb, meaning that if one cannot command his desires, then he must find a way to accomplish them by his own will.

“All of Europe is sitting on a volcano, and when the explosion comes, it will once again drag us into war. In the sacred name of peace, the United States is being called upon to take part in the institutions of Europe. But there is no peace in Europe.”

- Senator [Hiram] Johnson in the Senate on January 16th, 1935

(212)

Those who want to uphold the banner of pure Americanism see the witch of ethnic hatred sitting at the cradle of the children of Europe, singing a terrible lullaby: “Kill, kill, kill!”



(213)

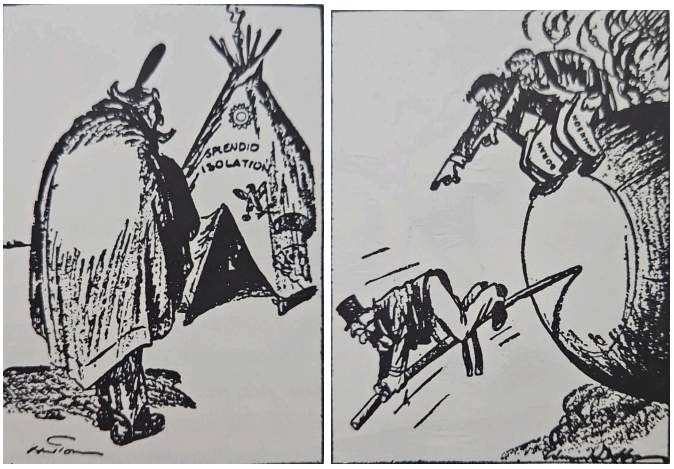
No wonder, then, that the fight against becoming entangled in a strange world may bear the same ominous warning as at the gates of hell: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!"

Home, Sweet Home

Thus, the endeavor of the United States has become to "stay at home." "Home, sweet home" rings out as a defiant song of American foreign policy. But the "sweet home" sometimes takes on a strange shape.

(214)

On his tall post, Uncle Sam seemed unreal; in this age of world trade, he seemed to have returned to the days of the Indian tepee. "Stay out of it!" the isolationists shout.



(215)(216)

(217)

In 1934/35, the battle for entry into the League of Nations had flared up in America. Despite Roosevelt's support, the Senate then rejected entry. And to many, this entry seemed like a trap to capture America, with its immense riches, for the interests of Europe and the League of Nations.

(218)

The United States would hardly have joined the Permanent Court of International Justice without reservations. Even the supporters of participation in the Permanent Court of International Justice attached important reservations to the entry, which seemed overanxious. It is therefore not entirely fair to say, the cartoon scoffs, that America is recklessly plunging into the raging tides of world politics.

(219)

With an escort of reservations, the USA should enter the World Court.

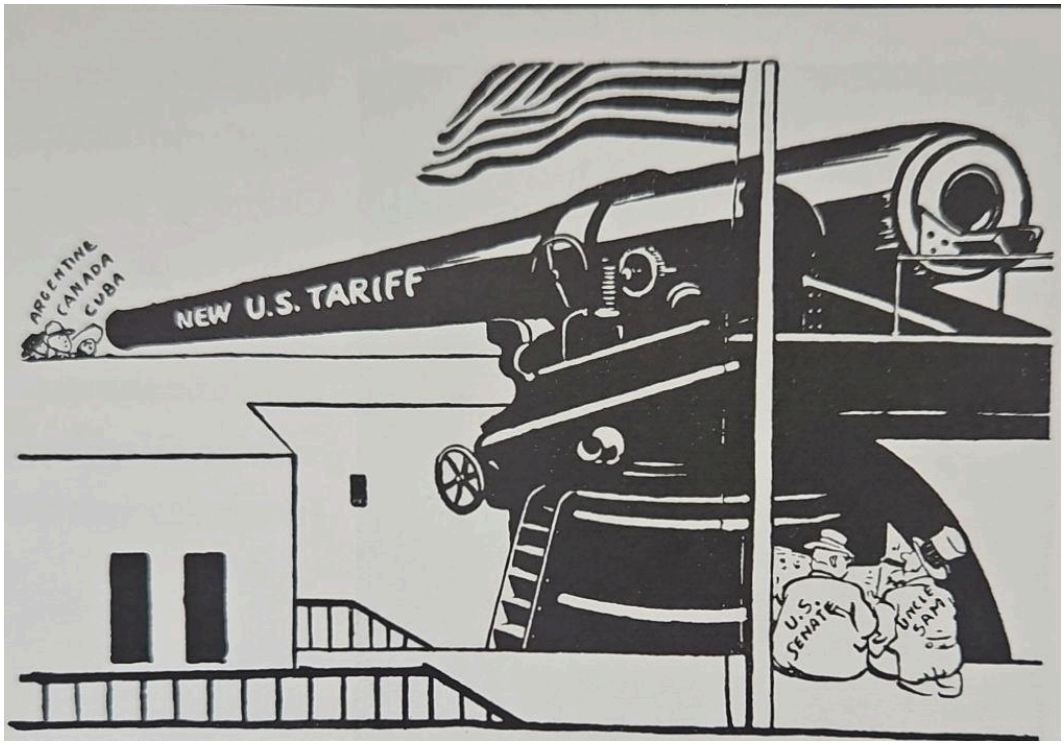
(220)

When the USA, so well prepared, prepared to plunge into the "big sea" (which some thought of as a goldfish pond), the USA's fear of water in world politics has led some to exclaim: "Oh, you daredevil Uncle Sam!"

"America, you have it better than our old continent!"

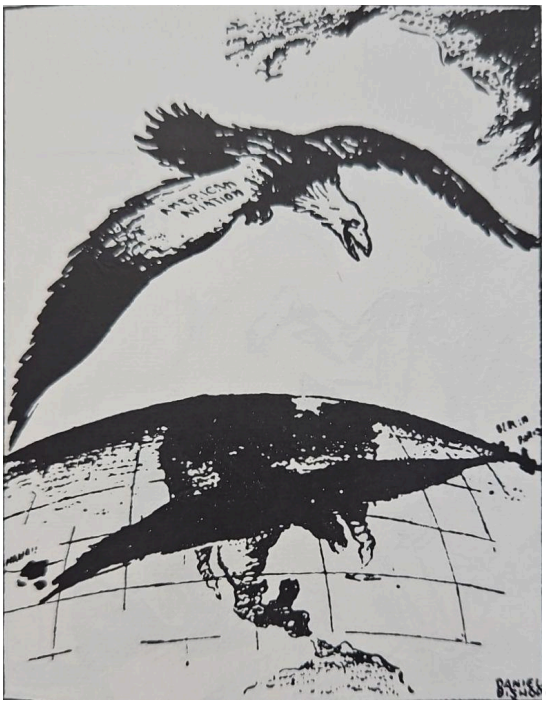
Protected in its continental isolation, without a foreign power at the gates of its world, proud that little battle glory fills the pages of its history, the United States has often made a virtue out of its luck and a vice out of the plight of others. But quite soon they themselves sipped at the drink of world power politics and finally drank from it to the full. The United States is today one of the world's great military powers, with a navy on a par with Great Britain and a formidable air force. With the Spanish-American War of 1898, the road of world power politics was paved; Cuba and the Philippines (and later, in the course of the same development, Haiti) thus came under the open or veiled domination of the USA. In 1934, the United States did retreat to a certain extent in this region, but without finding a way out of the world into which it had entered. "Capital instead of cannons" was certainly the maxim of the USA when its economic influence spread throughout Latin America. But American capital has not disdained to call in the guns for help. The "intervention" in Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Venezuela speaks for itself; "dollar diplomacy" has become a dirty word. Woodrow Wilson and Roosevelt have tried to get away from this approach - the entanglements and responsibilities have remained.

The United States, which prides itself on having renounced war as a means of national policy as its gift to the old world, has fully participated in the economic war. The United States has applied immigration restrictions and high customs barriers, even when all of this affected the vital interests of other powers. "And you America, have it better than the old continent," was often heard as a distant mocking voice from the past.



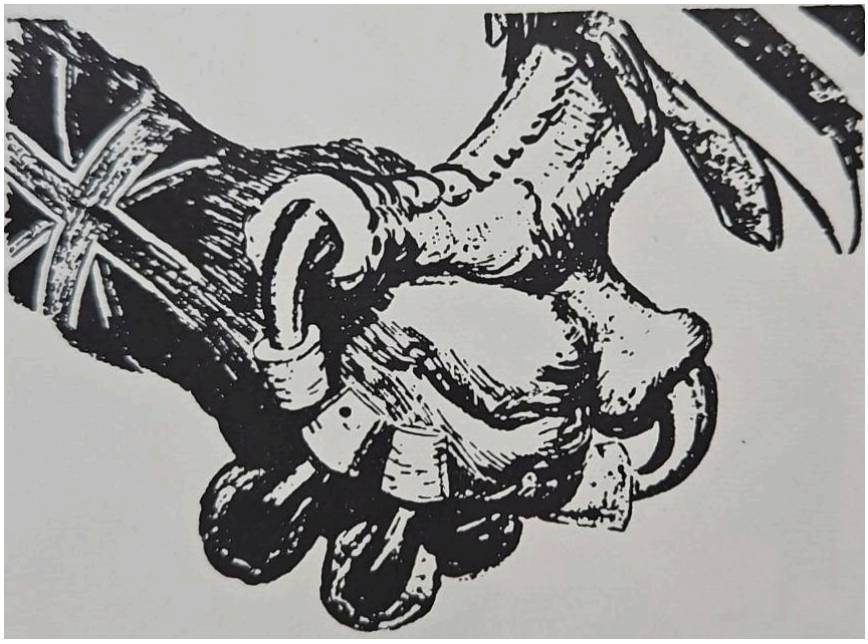
(221)

Sitting behind the heavy weapon of "murderous tariffs", the US Senate tells Uncle Sam: "I just can't understand, old chap, why these guys in Europe can't live peacefully among themselves like we Americans do."



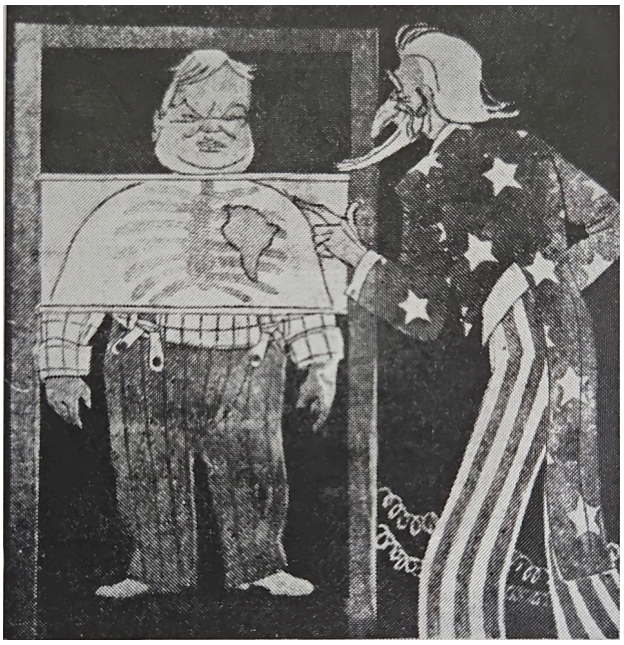
(222)

The American Air Force's eagle spreads its wings, and the large, dark shadow of American power falls over all of South America - America has entered world politics as a new air power.


(223)

Overnight, so to speak, America has become a military and world power. The once peace-loving hand has grown claws and learned to strike; England, the European naval world power, and the young naval power of the USA are now exchanging a "new handshake".

Throughout the 20th century, the actions of the USA in South America oscillated between “military conquest” and interventions in the name of law and order. The forms and means of exerting influence changed, but the interweaving of American interests with South America remained the same.


(224)

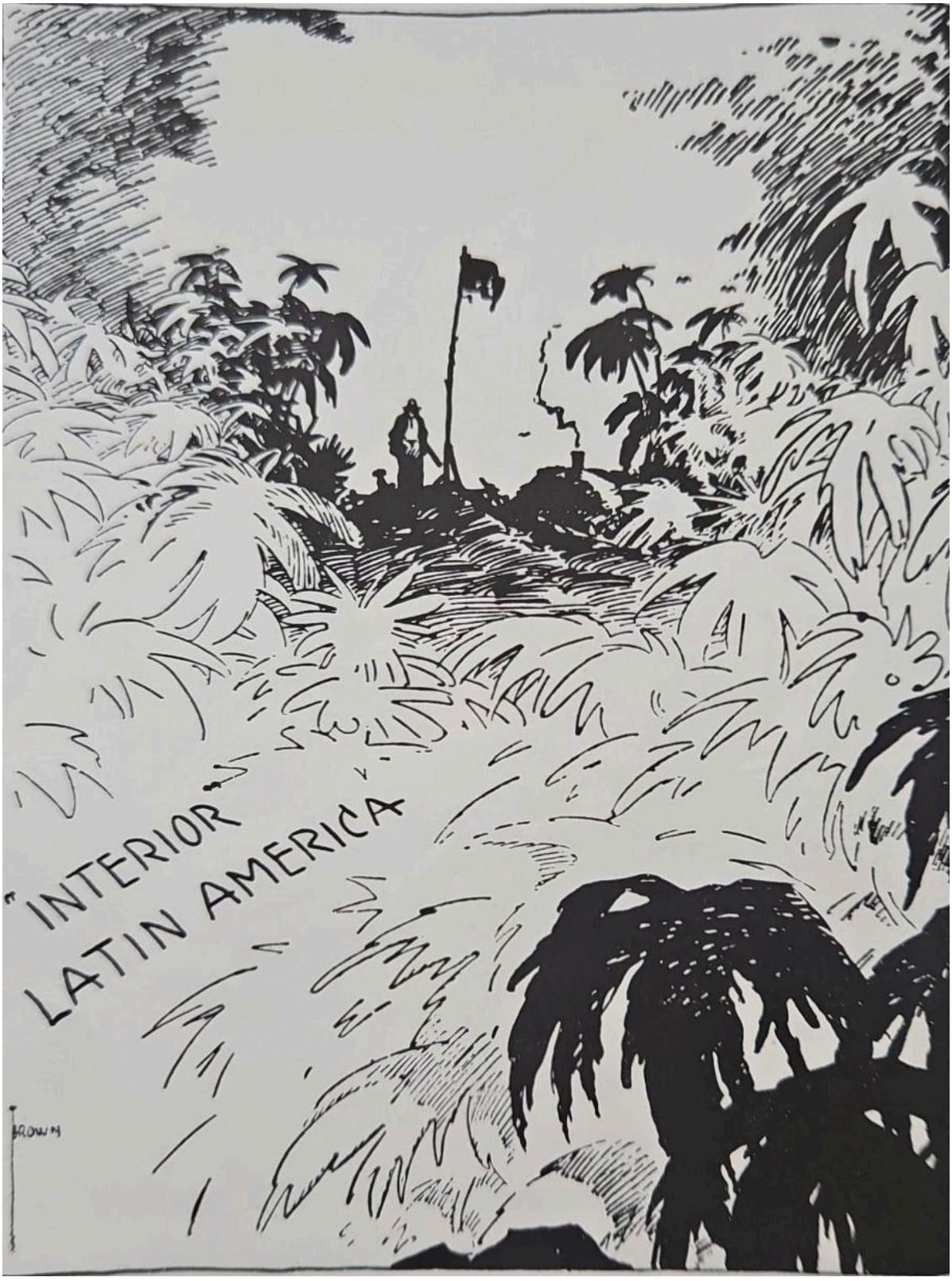
It was said of Herbert Hoover that his heart was the shape of South America.

(225)

Hoover's Secretary of State, [Henry] Stimson, proclaimed non-intervention. But when everything blew up right under American warships, this virtuoso performance of abstinence was sometimes too much, even for America's greatest political virtue.

(226)

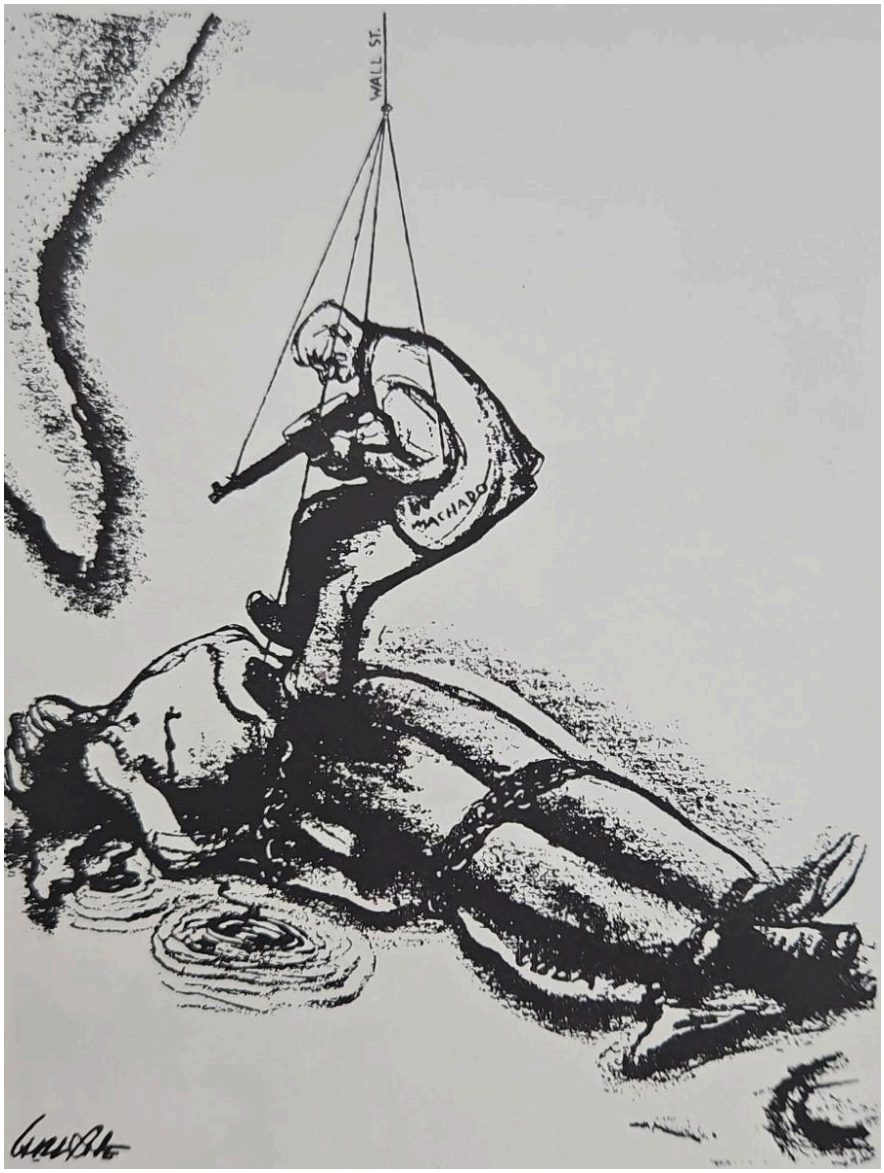
Indeed, the United States has often enough intervened with the full weight of its military might. In Nicaragua, the American dove of peace brought a strange olive branch.



(227)

For many years, Americans often stood on South American soil, lost in the wilderness and the jungle: "people without a fatherland".

In 1934, it seemed as though America was readying to liquidate an era. It gave up its direct rule over Cuba, the Philippines and Haiti as a “dark legacy from a faded imperialist era”. The U.S., Roosevelt declared in messages to Congress, now renounces its right of intervention. The new treaties have been glorified as the end of dollar diplomacy.



(228)

In the caricature, dollar diplomacy had a terrible face. Dollar diplomacy was supported by plutocratic dictatorships in Cuba and elsewhere. Wall Street pulled the strings in the reign of terror of [Gerardo] Machado* in Cuba, who had given “free Cuba” to plundering and devastation by big finance.

*Gerard Machado was the President of Cuba from 1925 to 1933. Formerly a general involved in the Cuban War of Independence in 1895-98, Machado’s initial popularity declined when he ran for a second term and began to use repressive tactics on opponents. He was forced to step down in 1933.

But, many in the US have asked themselves, can we relinquish a responsibility that actually belongs to us? Should we not retain leadership in areas that would all too easily fall into chaos without our help for the forces of order?

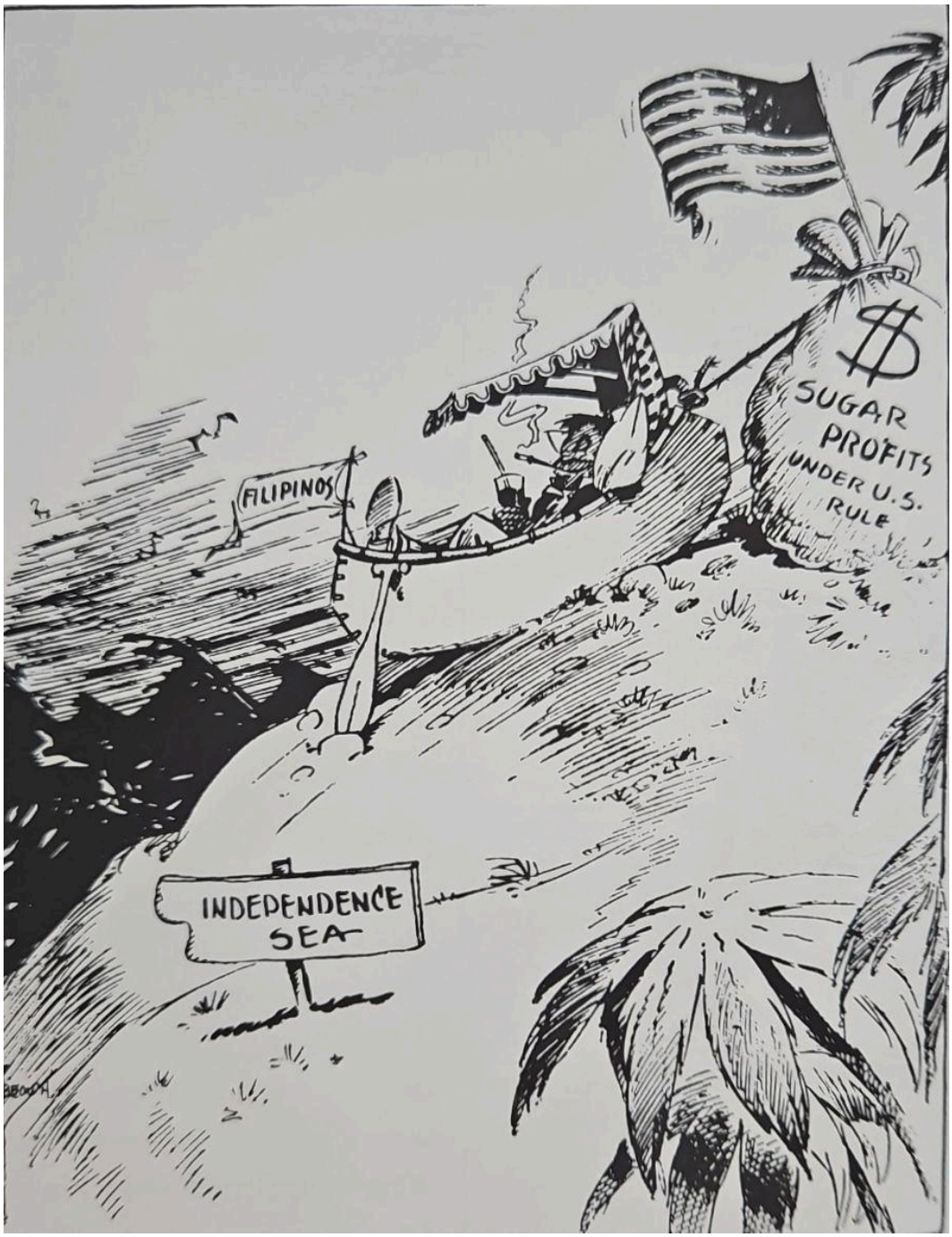
(229)

Doesn't voices echo across from Cuba, now that Uncle Sam is far away: "Uncle, can we scuffle?"

(230)

Doesn't Haiti, with its eternal revolutions and convulsions of its social crises, have a strange pastime that can quickly get out of hand?

It was especially difficult with the Philippines. They are completely dependent on the US market, which is now closed to them after their declaration of “independence”. The Philippines holds large metal warehouses for armaments at the gates of Japan, which is a world-historical opportunity.



(231)

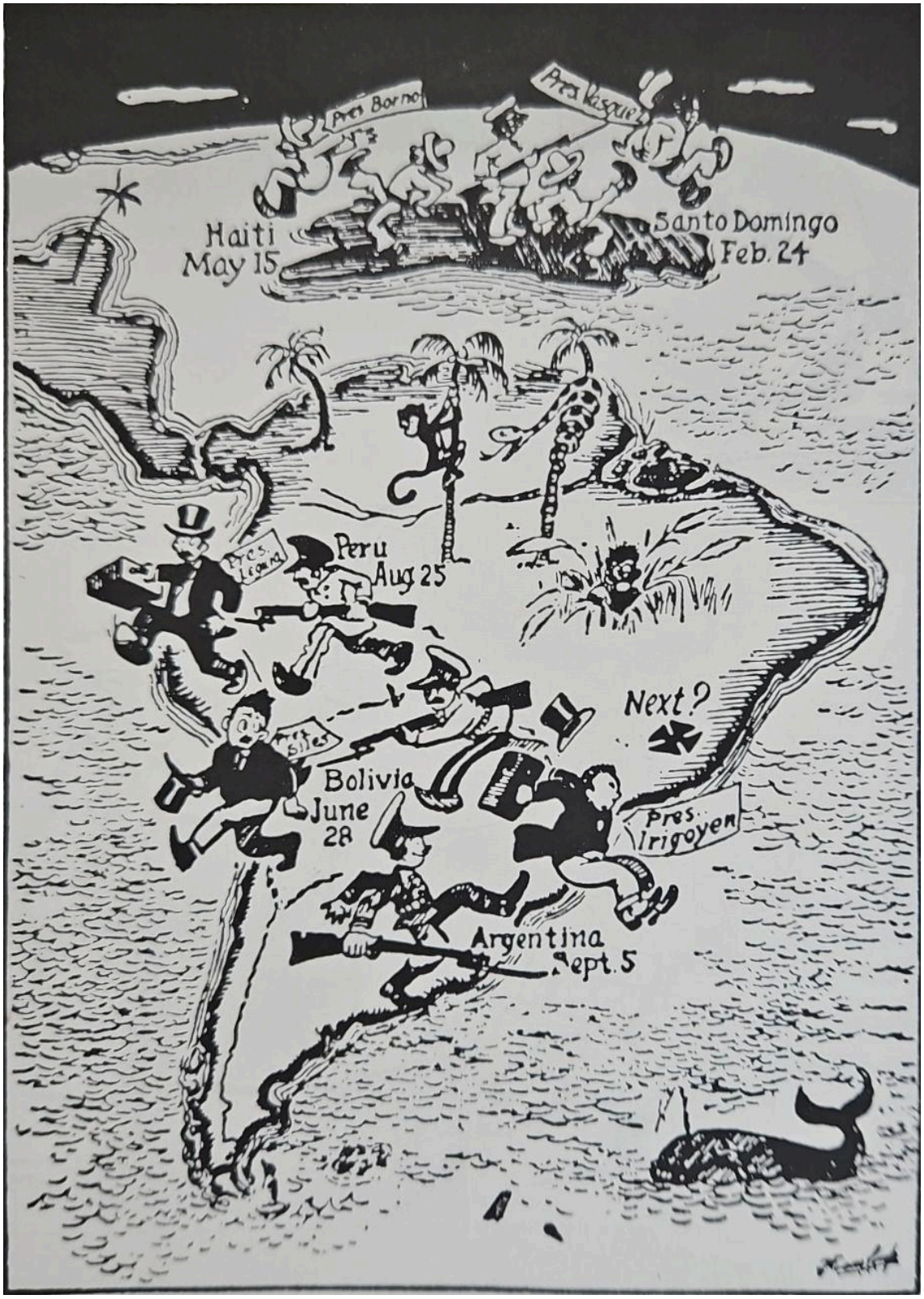
“Do you need independence?”, the Americans asked the Filipinos. Don't you think you had better leave your canoe chained to the economic advantages of sugar importation than to let it rush down the rapids of ‘independence’?

(232)

America has not yet completely released the Philippines: American influence is still far-reaching and strong enough during its ten-year transition period, and the freedom of the Philippines does not extend further than what Uncle Sam's rubber allows.

(233)

It is not yet that dangerous day for the Philippines when the gift of independence, sent to them with the best wishes for Christmas from the US Senate, will be theirs entirely.



(234)

The United States was always preceded by the troubled world of South America: in 1930, it looked like the map above.

5. The Struggle for Supremacy in the Far East

“It is still China's policy to ‘subdue barbarians with barbarians’.”

- From the memorandum of the Japanese Ministry of War from October 1934

The Struggle for Supremacy in the Far East

“Sleeping Asia awakens, and is shaken from one end to the other. Two-thirds of humanity is on the march – and no one knows where to.”
- General [Jan] Smuts in Cape Town on February 3rd, 1935

The knots of fate are tied no less in the Far East – across the Pacific Ocean, on the Soviet-Russian-Japanese borders, in the Chinese Empire – than in East Africa and the Mediterranean. The history of the Far East in the twentieth century is the history of Japan's rise. Since the Russo-Japanese War, Japan has been an undisputed great power; after the World War, it set out to embrace its status. The Washington treaties of 1921 - a major supplement to the Versailles Treaty - seemed to establish the power-political system of the Far East and the Pacific in a rigid framework: while the USA was recognized as a world naval power on a par with the British fleet, the ratio of the Japanese to the American and British fleets was set at 3:5. The “open door” in China and in the Far East, that is to say the economic equality of the powers as well as the inviolability of Chinese territory, was established by these treaties. But almost simultaneously with the collapse of the system of the Versailles Treaty in Europe, the Washington Treaties have also been overtaken by worldwide developments. From 1931 to 1933, Japan took control of Manchukuo; in 1934, the heir to the Chinese throne became emperor of Manchukuo under Japanese protection. In 1935, part of northern China also came under Japanese influence. At the same time, a fierce underground struggle for flank positions is taking place in Mongolia. The Soviet Union and Japan have created buffer states in outer and inner Mongolia. Vladivostok, “the Empress of the East”, the red stronghold of Siberia, itself hemmed in by the wedge of the Japanese power position, is in turn in a dangerous flank position to the Japanese power base on the continent. Thus, a tremendous struggle has broken out here, on which not least the fate of the world depends.
This great struggle is overshadowed, however, by the problem of China. The destiny of the earth will be decided not least by the question of whether the four hundred million people of China will be able to form themselves into a power structure; whether Japan will be able to set the terrible masses of China in motion for itself; whether China will serve as a springboard for Bolshevik world revolution, or whether the Anglo-Saxon powers will use China as a buffer against Japan and thus be driven onto the path of world power and world conquest themselves, willingly or unwillingly. In April 1934, Japan protested vehemently against the economic support of China by the world powers, to be wielded for their own selfish ends. The Japanese Empire has proclaimed its mission to be a guardian of peace and prosperity in the Far East, excluding foreign influences. “Four hundred million people are on the march, and no one knows where.”

Japan has given the Far Eastern world a tremendous impetus; it has risen up as a prosecutor against the “rich and plutocratic powers”. As a figure of unrest, it therefore lives in the caricatures of the world press; the Japanese state is counted among the major global sores.

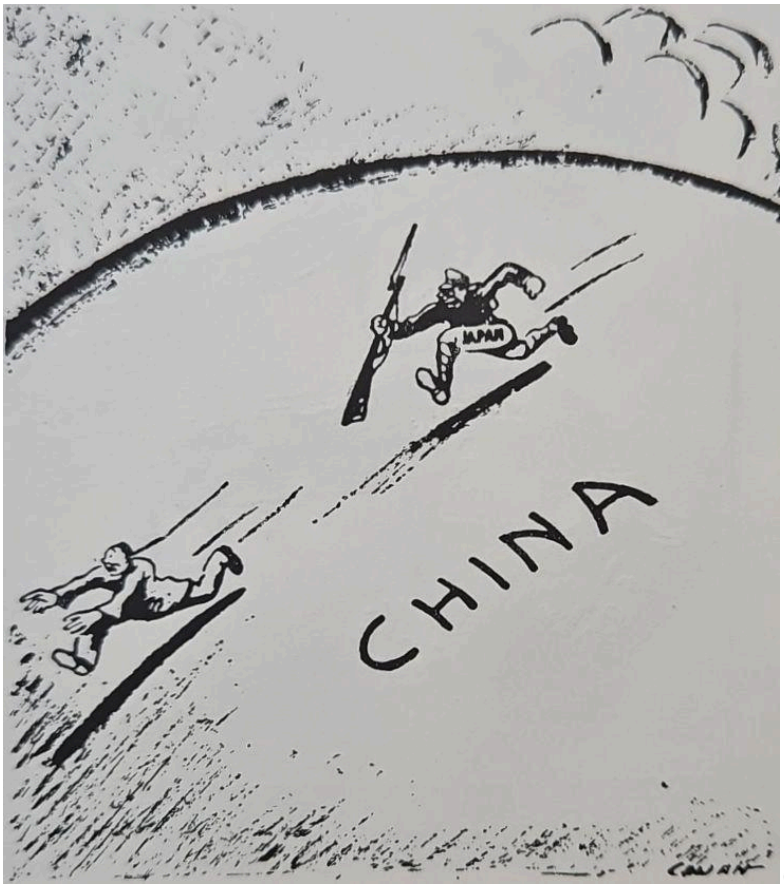
War on Japanese "Militarism"

(235)

One minimizes Japan's real power; its role in the world appears as a bluff of a uniform.

(236)

Japan was also said to be in favor of "open doors". (The Washington Agreements established the principle of open doors, of equal and unrestricted trade rights.)

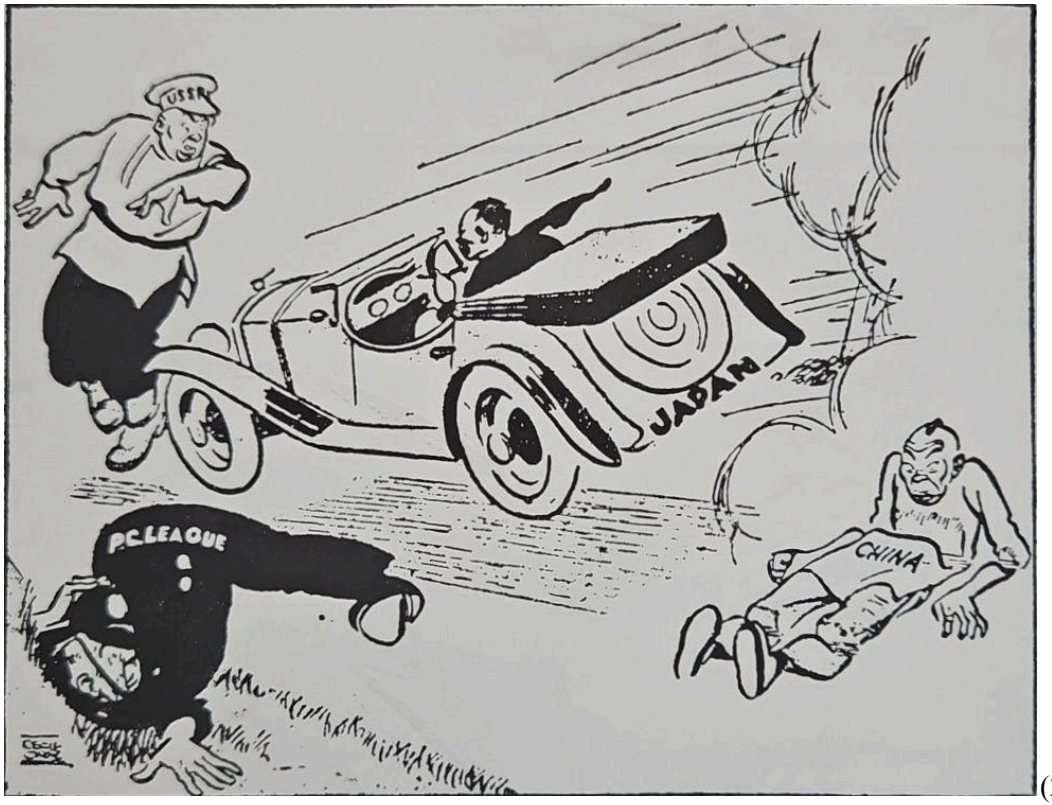


(237)

"Business as usual" (when Japan's hunt against China continues in earnest) is the slogan of the Far East.

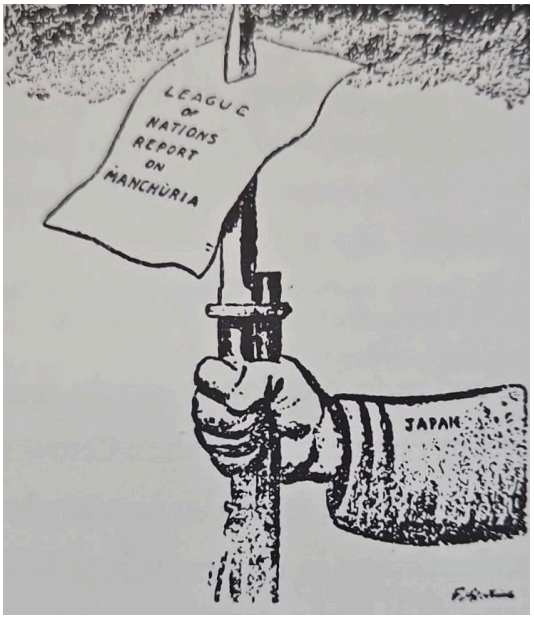
(238)

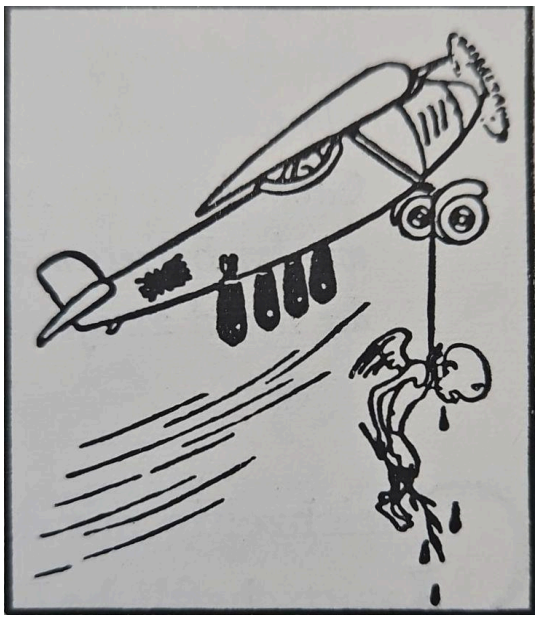
This cartoon says that Japan uses a peculiar stamp among the peoples of the Far East.



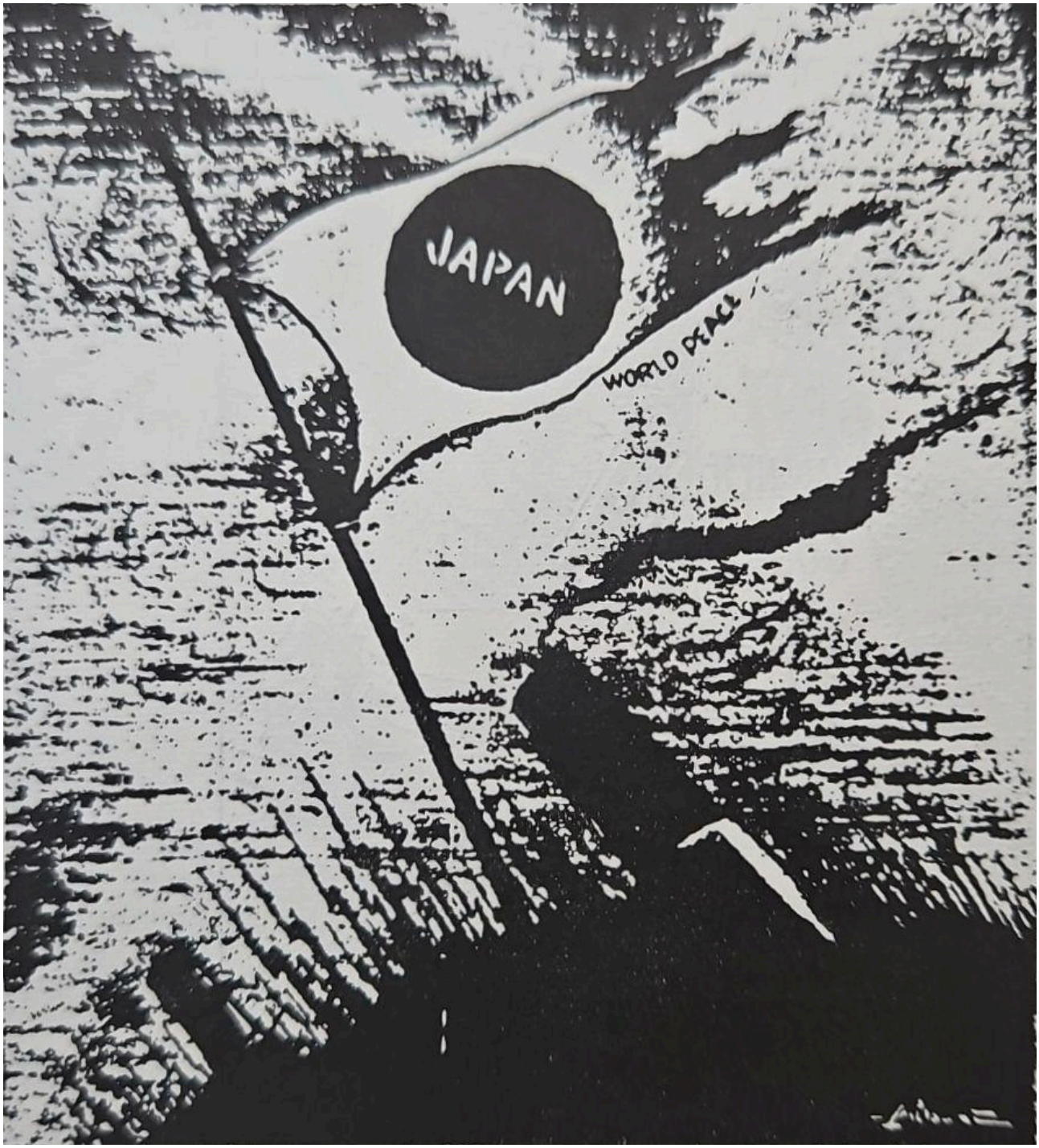
(239)

The League of Nations fearfully moves aside like a traffic cop in front of the speeding car of Japan.




(240)(241)

The Japanese army, according to an American cartoon, has a strange folder for the protests that are received against its actions. Japan's bombers have become the executioners of peace, says the Soviet cartoonist, whose bombers have apparently stopped dropping Bible tracts.



(242)

Thus – in the chorus of the world press, the blood-red sun of the Japanese flag darkens the light of world peace.

Japan's Economic Offensive

"The supply of good goods at reasonable prices meets the needs of the majority of consumers, and these make up the majority of the world's population. From this point of view, our country, with its relatively low standard of living, is in a favorable position. The situation is quite different, for example, in England and Holland, which obviously put us at a disadvantage in this respect. In order to ensure a profit for the ruling oligarchy, these countries force the native population of their colonies to buy very expensive industrial products. This is a flagrant contradiction of the simplest principles of morality. In this respect, the interests of the Japanese Empire coincide with the interests of the broad masses of the whole world, and so, from the point of view of morality, Japan will undoubtedly achieve the final and decisive victory."

- **From the October 1934 brochure published by the Japanese Ministry of War on the importance of national defense**

At the same time as it has been advancing on the mainland, Japan has had great economic success worldwide. In the Far East and Middle East, in Africa and South America, around the entire Pacific Ocean, Japanese industry has succeeded in displacing the trade of the old industrial powers to a high degree. The caricature of the world press has linked Japan's military advance and economic conquest.

(243)

The god of war himself has gone among the merchants and prays to his fellow gods for secrecy when he praises Japanese goods, lest he be recognized.

(244)

Japan's "superb salesmanship" was portrayed in a mocking way.

(245)

The same headline was used for exploding shells: "Superb Salesmanship".

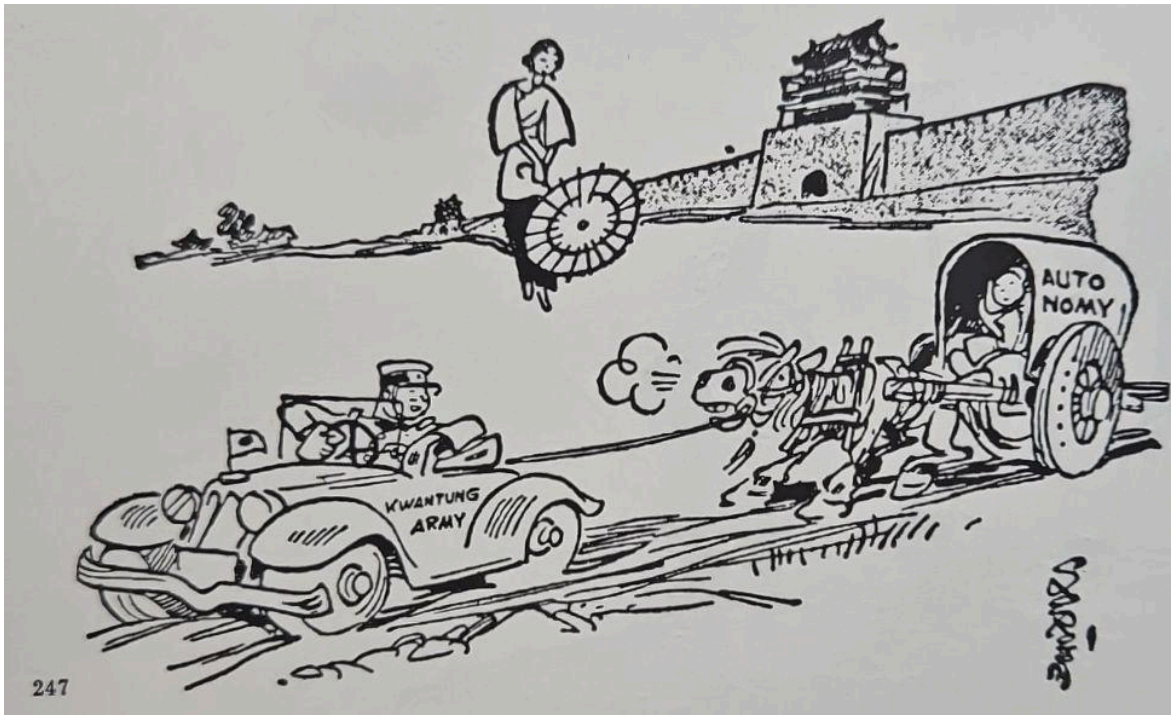
(246)

Many countries have introduced quota restrictions in an attempt to block the sun of Japan's export boom.

Empire of Manchukuo

"By the grace and will of heaven we have ascended the throne and laid down in this law the basic principles for the sovereign organization of the empire.
1. The Manchurian Empire shall be ruled by an Emperor. Special provisions shall be made for succession to the throne.
2. The dignity of the Emperor is inviolable.
3. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, which combines the sovereign rights and exercises them in accordance with the provisions of this law."
- From the Constitution of Manchukuo, March 1st, 1934

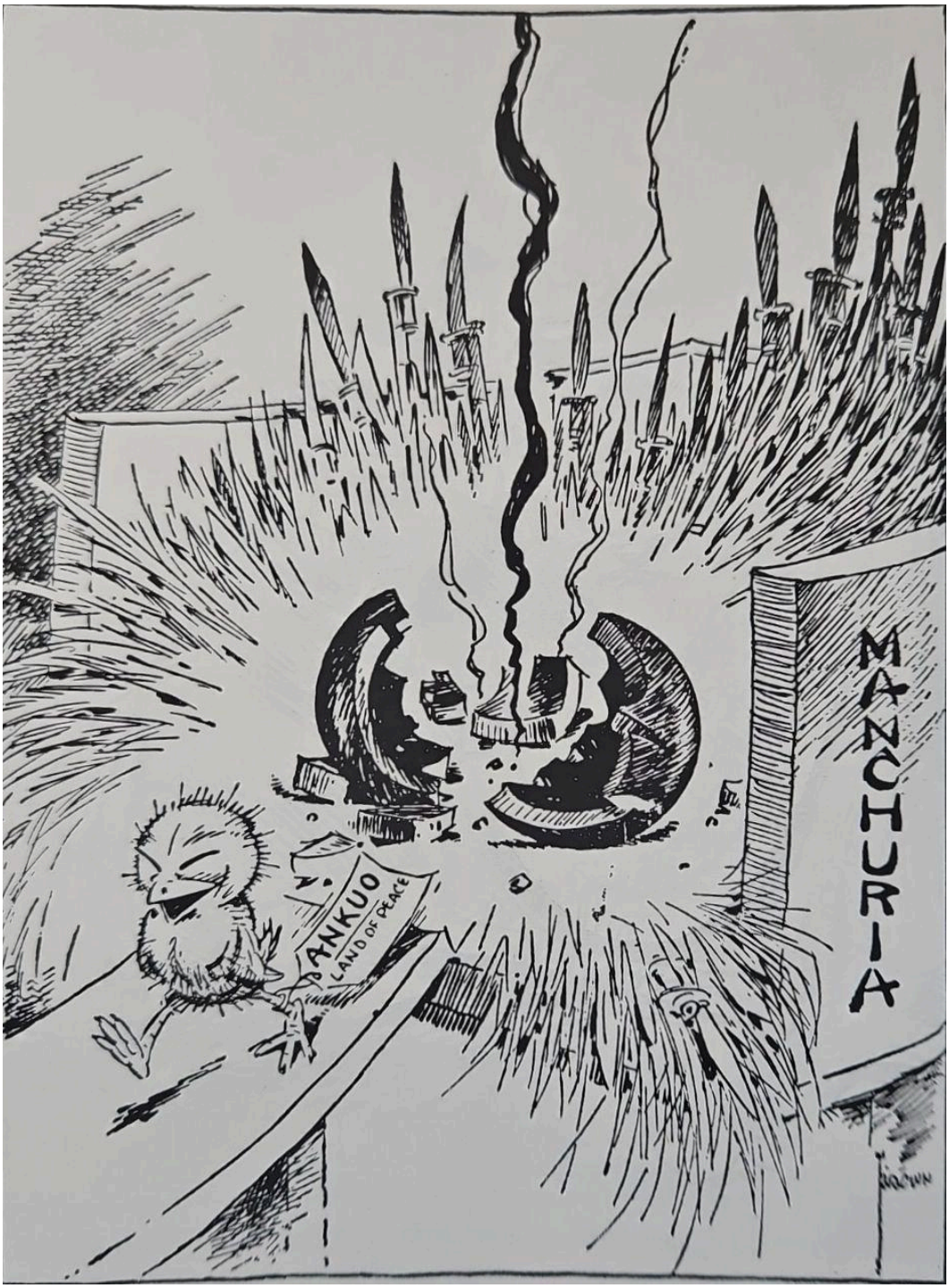
The occupation of Manchuria, its separation from China and its autonomous organization was a revolution in terms of domestic and foreign policy. The power system of the Asian continent has been revolutionized as a result, and a considerable part of old China has been fundamentally transformed by the new Japanese-Manchurian administration. With the Japanese armies, the spirit of modern technical culture has marched over northern China.



(247)

The old, picturesque cart of the Chinese resistance, which in northern China sought independence from both China and Japan at the same time, did not stand much of a chance against the modern Kwantung Army car.

The caricature of the world press, however, usually made Manchukuo's double face its theme: namely, Manchukuo's independence and sovereignty on the one hand, as it was formally proclaimed, and the new state's intimate dependence on Japan on the other.



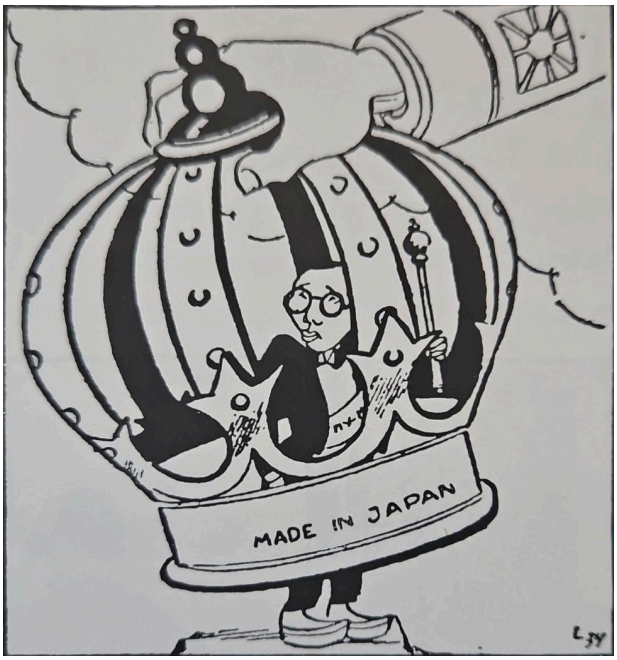
(248)

The new land of peace was hatched in a nest laid out with swords.

(249)

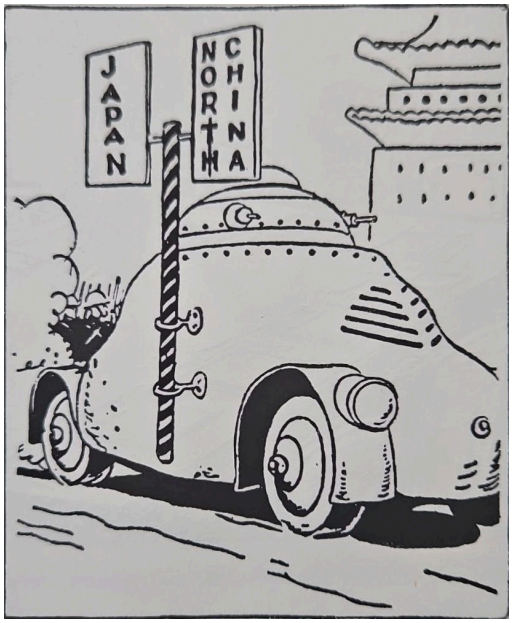
On the occasion of Japan's "recognition of Manchukuo," another drawing shows the Japanese man saying to his mirror image: "Oh, Manchukuo! What a surprise! I'm very happy to meet you!"

The Soviets, who saw themselves deprived of their own springboard for conquering Asia with the occupation of Japan on the mainland, gave vent to its resentment, like a philanthropist whose most sacred feelings had been offended.



(250)

They illustrated the "Imperial Coronation" in Manchukuo.



(251)

They made a grim comment about the "floating border" system that had been in place for a time during the Japanese advance into North China.

The League of Nations and the Far Eastern Crisis

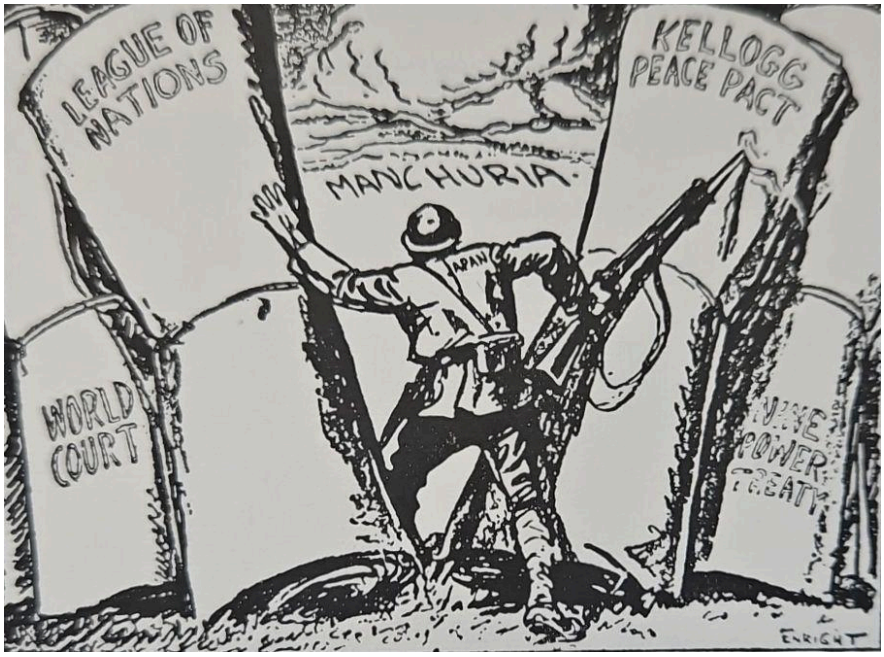
“On March 27, the withdrawal from the League of Nations will take effect and ‘ours will be the greater burden of responsibility.’”

- **Excerpts from Foreign Minister [Kōki] Hirota's speech in the Reichstag on March 22nd, 1935**

The Manchurian conflict is one of the great political defeats of the League of Nations. The Geneva Confederation was unable to prevent the “assassination of the integrity of China” and had to accept Japan's withdrawal from its community. The shots of the East Asian War sounded to the world like the mocking laughter of the Powers of Destiny at the efforts of the League of Nations for disarmament and peace.

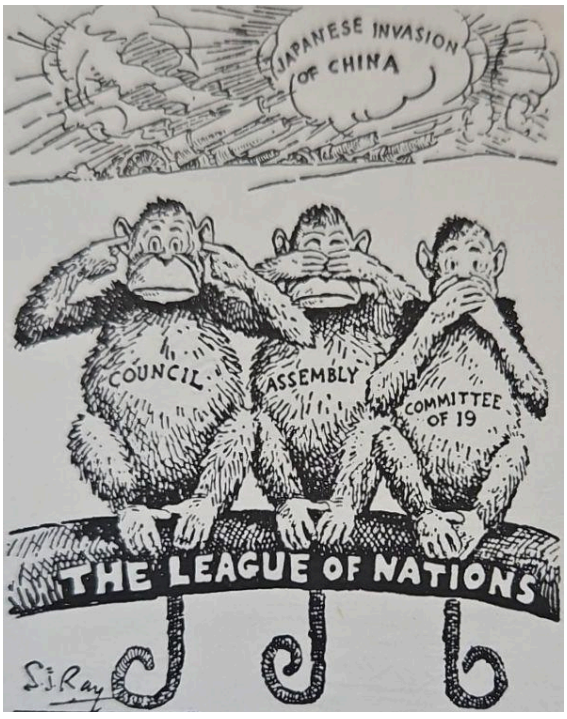
(252)

A slight disturbance from outside occurred when the formal words were spoken: “The disarmament conference is open.”



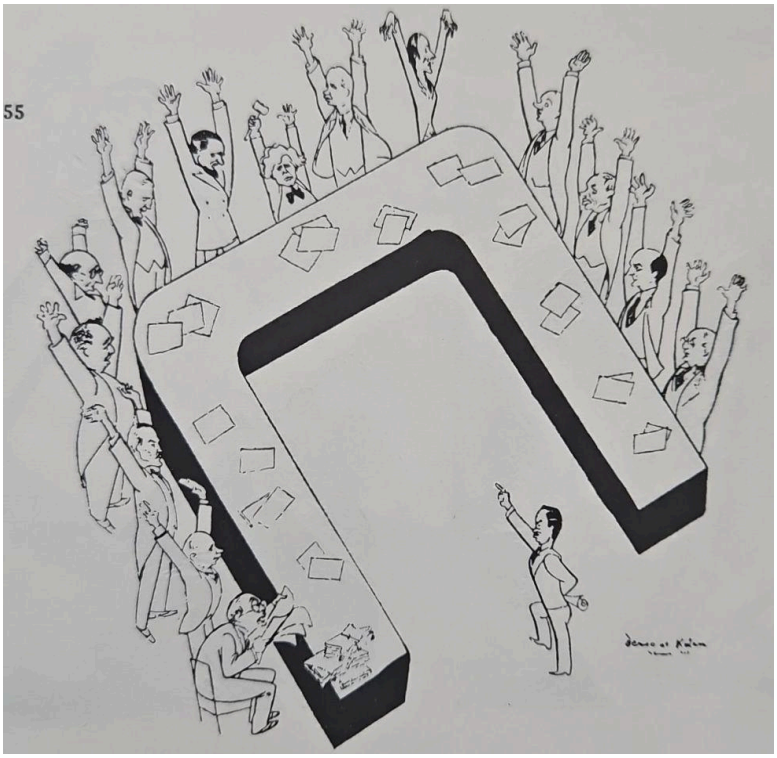
(253)

The sacred scrolls of the great "peace documents," the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Covenant of the Prohibition of War, had become paper barricades.



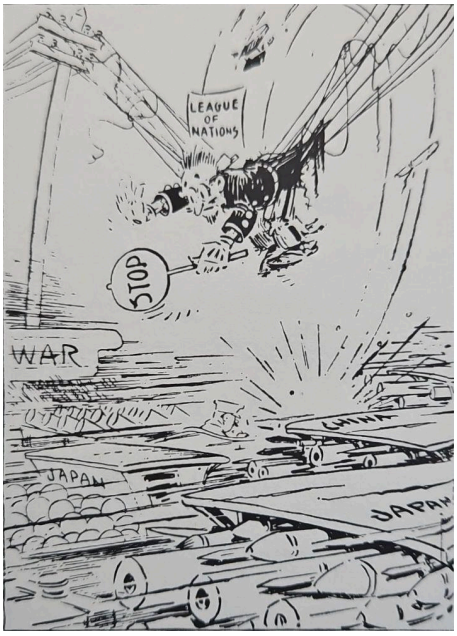
(254)

The Assembly, Council and Committee of Nine of the League of Nations took turns covering their ears, eyes and mouth.



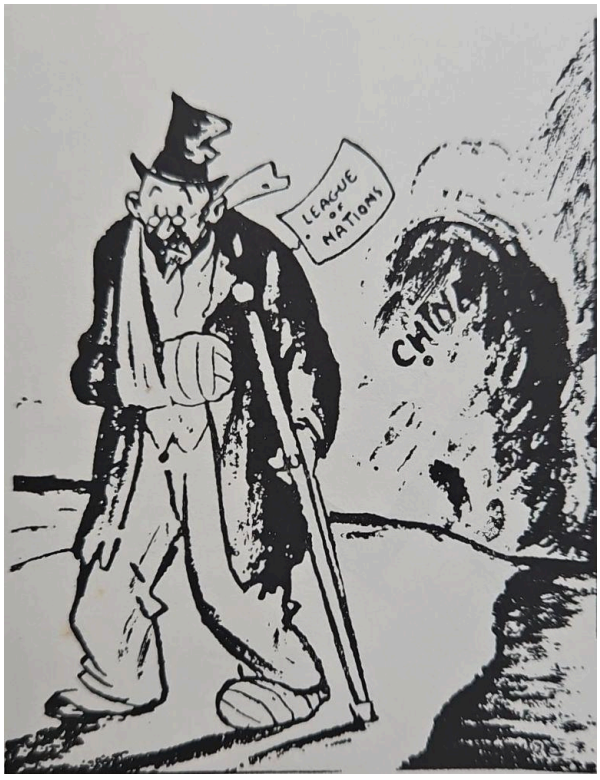
(255)

When the Japanese delegate to the League of Nations put forward his opinion with a raised finger in front of the Assembly – as the cartoon could depict it – the August assembly was seized with terror, and all hands shot up in the air.



(256)

The halt imposed by the League of Nations on the mobilization of the powers in East Asia, like a traffic warden held in the sky, was powerless.



(257)

The great invalid of the Manchurian War was the League of Nations.

(258)

"My war is still more decent than your disarmament theater," the German illustrator said to the Japanese.

(259)

The League of Nations spread a rescue blanket for China, so that it might escape the East Asian conflagration. The League was unable to extinguish the fire itself, as the fire brigade had become entangled in the hoses, which, like everything in Geneva, tended to take the form of paragraphs.

China, Where To?

The Tribunal in Geneva has declared Japan to be the “aggressor”. The historians of the future may well ask themselves whether this was not in fact the clash of two historical offensives and whether Japan's “attack” was not in fact a response to the threat of a more powerful, as yet unimaginable attack. For the great internal fermentations of China still have many historical possibilities ahead of them: the persistence of the present existence of a nation of 400 million, the communist danger, which years ago still visibly stepped over China in the form of the red general [Mikhail] Borodin* and which is still devouring large areas of China today. Walls of fire and iron could arise that would close all paths to Japan. But China's historical paths will not ultimately decide the fate of Asia and the world.

*Mikhail Borodin was a Russian-Jewish Bolshevik and Comintern agent who served as an advisor to Chinese revolutionary and future KMT president Sun Yat-Sen. Borodin would flee China to Moscow in 1927 and was purged in 1951 during an “anti-cosmopolitan campaign”.

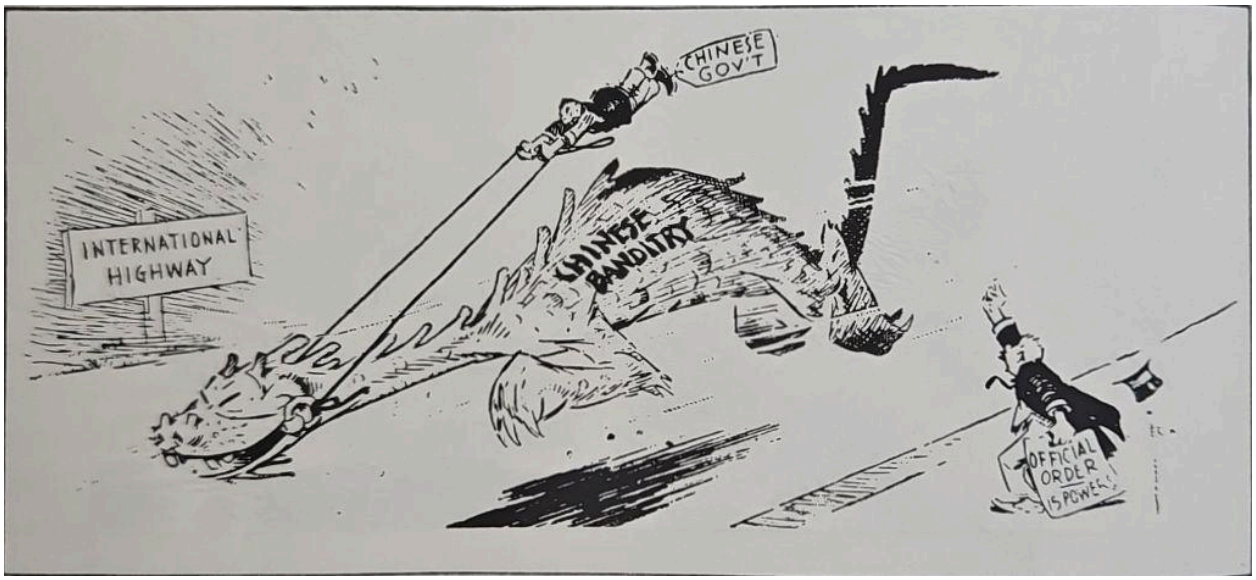
(260)

The world press and its caricaturists have therefore wondered whether the looming gigantic shadow of the Chinese people might not rise up over Japan, with its much smaller population, and whether the spectre of a terrible historical nemesis might not be wandering with Japan's armies.
Hasn't Japan, asks an American cartoonist, let a terrible genie out of the bottle with its actions?

(261)

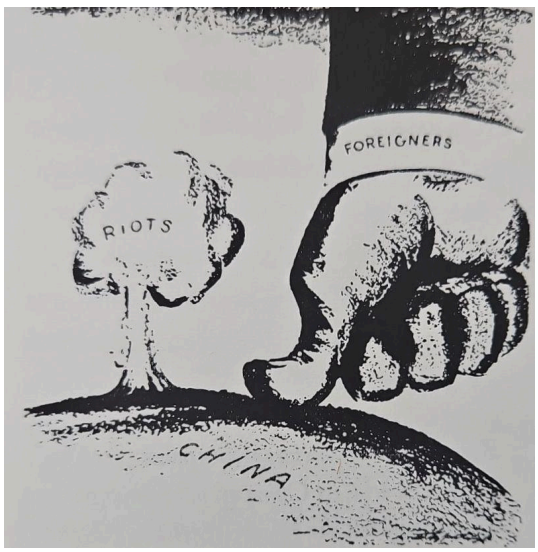
The Chinese dragon seemed to rear up against the blows of Japan. The Japanese hunter seems to tell himself: "I've caught something!"

The question of which path China would take was never silent. China is still afflicted with tremendous evils: large areas of the country are still burning from the communist upheaval; bandits with and without political masks are pillaging the people; the civil war – financed by foreign capital, which in turn is paid by the spoils of military or political conquest, is still an "industry" here and there; terrible poverty weighs down the country; floods and epidemics, which modern technical administration could conquer, still exact a blood-curdling toll every year. Will China be able to withstand these dangers? Will China achieve a stable order, or will it remain a global political flashpoint?



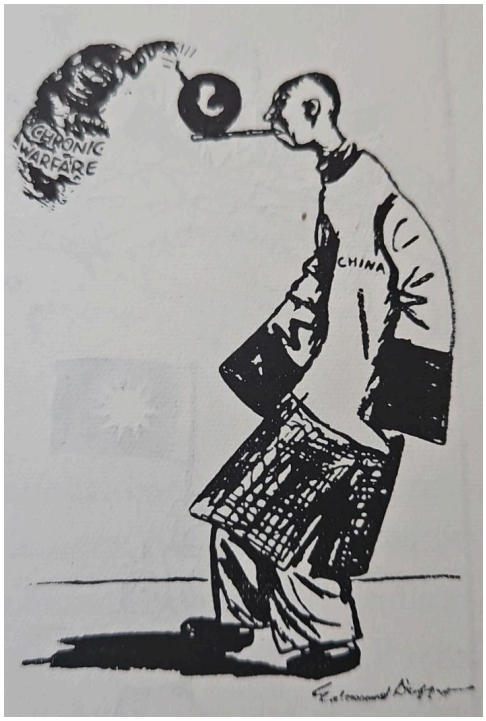
(262)

Will the government be a helpless plaything of wild forces, and will the Chinese dragon race along, endangering everyone on the highway of international politics?



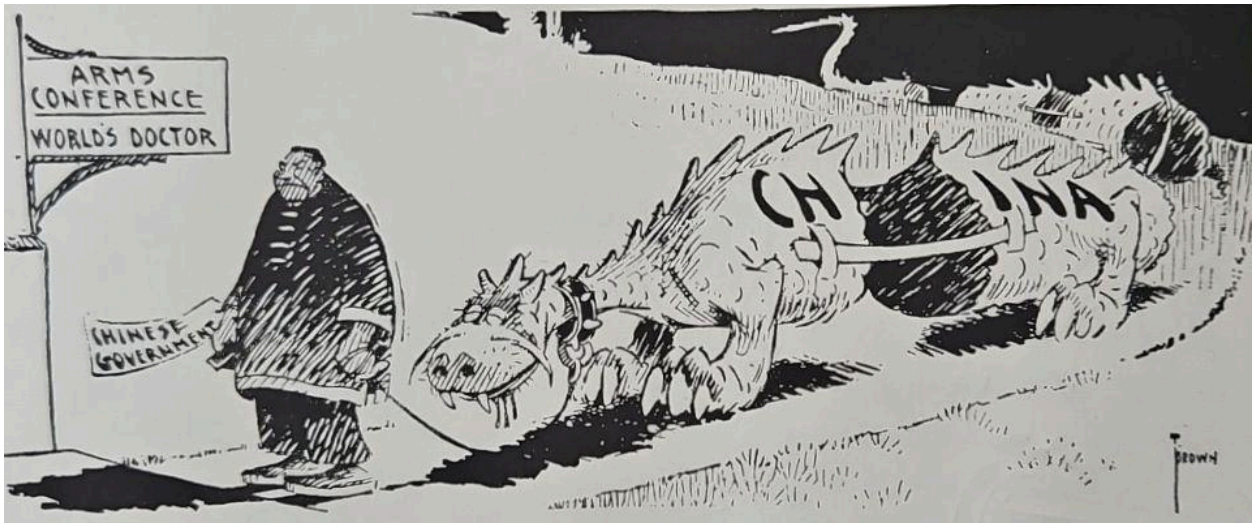
(263)

The pressure of strangers repeatedly provokes the eruption of social turmoil.



(264)

China juggles the bomb of the revolution.

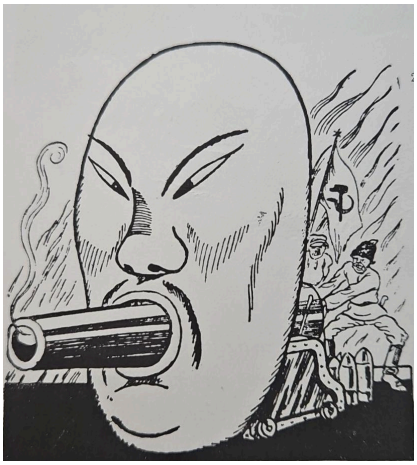


(265)

When the powers met in Washington in 1921, they were confronted with a fragmented China. The "world doctor" of the Washington Conference faced a difficult case, according to this drawing. Will China recover by itself - the future of a large part of the world depends on it - and if not, who will be its "doctor", to possibly dethrone the present doctor of decay?

(266)

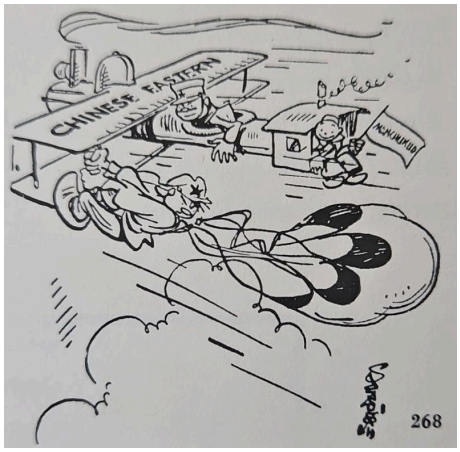
Dismembered and weakened by a major political disease, China has often come close to becoming a springboard for Bolshevik revolution.
At times, the Chinese revolution signaled the international settlement in Shanghai using a strange code (with the flag of young China and the Soviet flag).


(267)

Is the face of China, a French illustrator wondered, nothing but a mask hiding Bolshevik turmoil?

The Soviet Union in Retreat

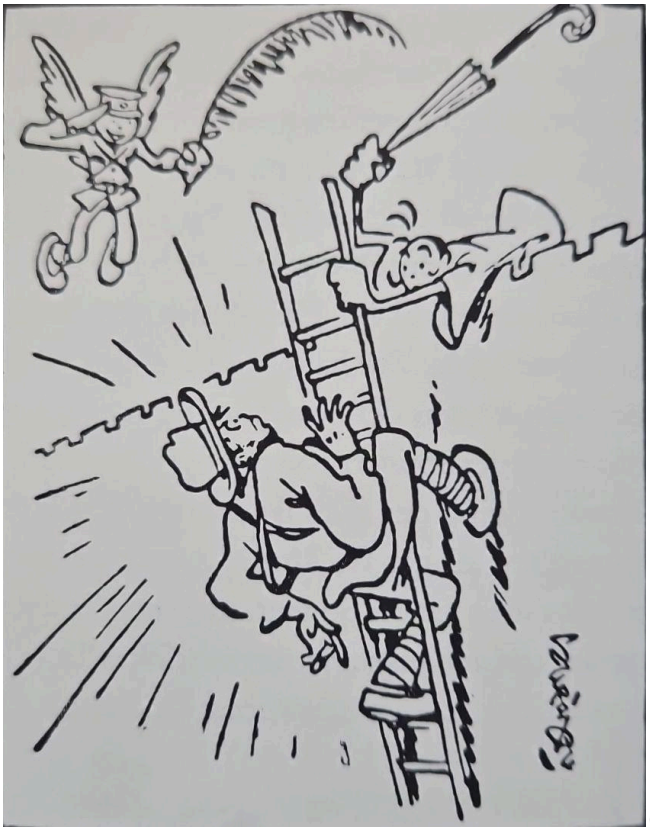
It was difficult not to draw caricatures of the trade surrounding the East China Railway. The Soviet Union had been driven out of Manchuria by Japan, but it still held the East China Railway, which ran right through Manchuria and was now like a thorn in the flesh of the new Manchukuo. The Soviet Union could not hold on to this outpost, but the Soviets waited a long time before abandoning its untenable position. For years, the horse-trading of the sales negotiations went back and forth. Month after month, the sums demanded went down. Finally, in March 1935, the Soviet Union signed the sales contract; the fox bit off its own tail to free itself from its desperate situation.



(268)

(269)

The Soviet Union was no longer happy with its possessions surrounded by Japanese power. Japanese planes buzzed over the Russian bear, and the locomotives of the railroad were chased away from the tracks like a startled pack of game when a big bird appears.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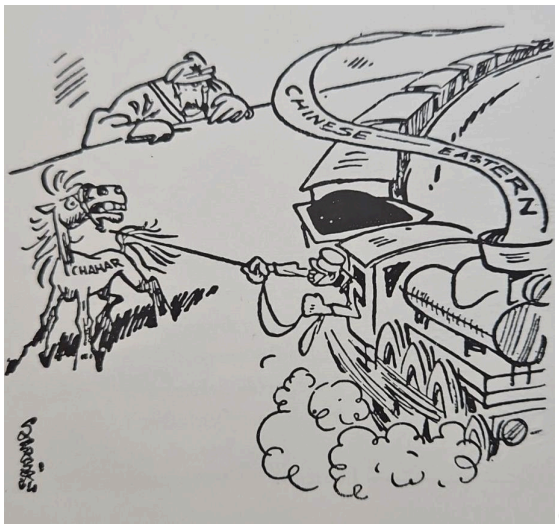
The Soviet love affair with Manchuria came to an end, as this Chinese artist had already depicted in 1930. The olive branch that Japan presented at the same time had its bitterness.



(271)

The East China Railway, however, ran on new tracks, while the Japanese engine driver tried to guide the surrounding country (Chahar) along the path that the East China Railway was now following in international politics.

(272)

The spokesmen of the Soviet Union had talked a lot about Manchukuo having been stolen from China by force. Now, under great bitterness, they carried out the practical recognition of the mocked puppet state of Manchukuo by selling the railroad. For China, however, which thus lost its former country, the railroads of Manchuria became slithering dragons, which many would fear to tread.

Like a witch's Sabbath, the things of the Far East are often blown in from the air.
“Two-thirds of humanity is on the move, and no one knows where.”

6. International Debt

International Debt

“At a time when treaty obligations have been widely disregarded or all too easily subordinated to considerations of short-term expediency, to the extent of undermining the most fundamental bases of human relations, the unwavering consistency with which Finland has fulfilled its obligations without hesitation has been encouraging.”

- **Note from the United States, dated July 7th, 1934, to Finland, as the only country to pay its debts.**

(273)

The United States lent billions to the Allies in the World War. Even at the birth of the so-called peace, the fight for the debts to the USA had begun. Uncle Sam has been depicted in countless variations as a Shylock who relentlessly demands money from his comrades-in-arms who shed their blood. In raising the question of debt, the United States has also raised the didactic finger that it likes to use in relation to Europe. They did not want to throw billions of war debts down the maw of European cannons.

The warning was in vain. Eventually, all states except Finland stopped paying the debt; they refused to carry the terrible burden of enormous annual debt payments for generations to come, for the sake of such a significant obligation from the past. In the dispute over the debt, aspects were honored that the German Reich had preached to the deaf ears of the Allies for years. It was now decided that the enormous payments from nation to nation were an evil and that the whole past should finally be wiped out of existence.

When the great world economic crisis hit the world, when the loans froze, the debts of the powers to the USA also froze.

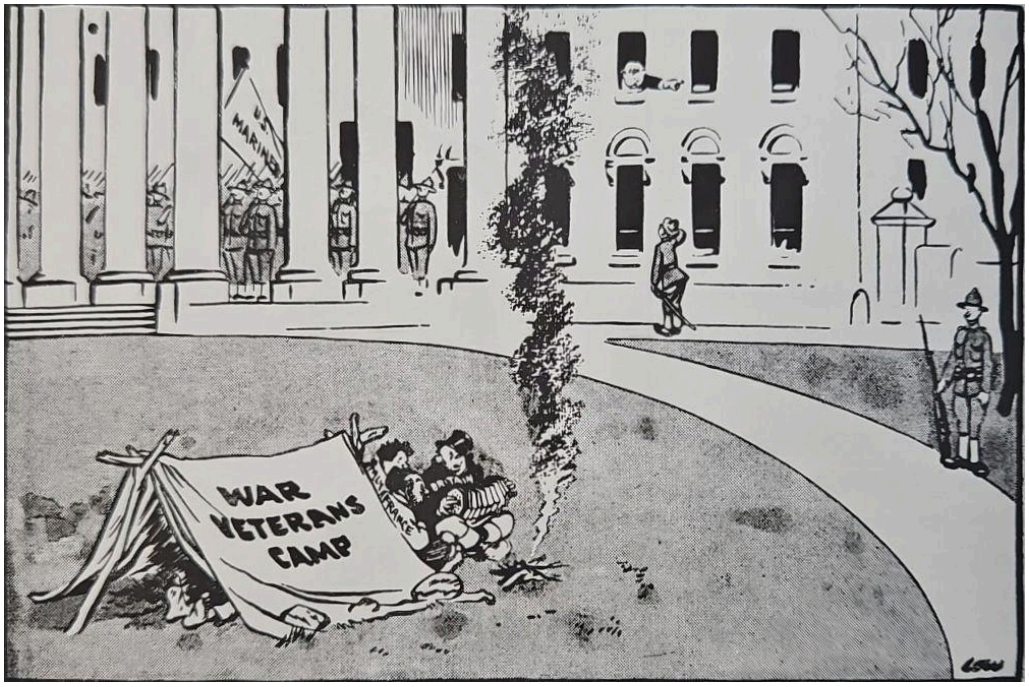
Even if these debts had not caused such terrible devastation in the world economy as the German tributes had, these payments from state to state still meant a heavy burden for the deeply shattered world economy. These debts have not yet been formally canceled; but it is more likely that palm trees will flourish at the North Pole than that these debts will be “unfrozen” again. Contemporary life will probably ignore them, as it does other questions of debt and deficits; for one should let the dead bury their dead.

(274)

The debts incurred during the world war sometimes seemed like a terrible burden. Will the world be pushed down into the depths of chaos and destruction for a third time, under the merciless thumb of the debt question following the world war and the global economic crisis?

(275)

The USA had their reasons when they demanded the payment of the debt. "Not this hole, not down the maw of the guns!" they declared when asked to waive the debt.



(276)

The debtors proved to be difficult. The White House was still guarded because America's war veterans had just marched up for their bonus payments and pitched their tent camp in front of the government building; then other veterans turned up: the old allies from the World War, England, France and Italy, and tried to attract attention through their street music.

(277)

France was at the top of the list of debtors. The very rotund Herriot carried out the refusal to pay his debts; Miss America waited in vain for him, whom "she loved with all her heart", and for his abundance, which for her was "worth its weight in gold".

(278)

England continued to pay for a while. On "payday", the man in charge of collecting the money would sit glumly under the door with his receipt in hand, while the other powers (France, Belgium, Poland) had a bucket of water ready for the man who collected the installments.

Sometimes one might rebel against the creditor USA, but often one was on one's knees before it. After all, it was the provider of the new blessing of loans, and as an aggrieved and deceived creditor, America was not to be trifled with lightly. For a long time, the USA appeared to be the cornucopia of wealth, from which the fertilizing streams of capital emanate.

(279)

[J.P.] Morgan [Jr.], the great American banker, appeared like a new Jupiter: a strange rain god to whom, down in Paris, under the fluttering banners of the French Republic, processions sent up their prayers.

(280)

For French ministers, the American treasury was a source of pressure. [Joseph] Caillaux made the pilgrimage to the United States in 1925 - the task was as hopeless as milking a ram.

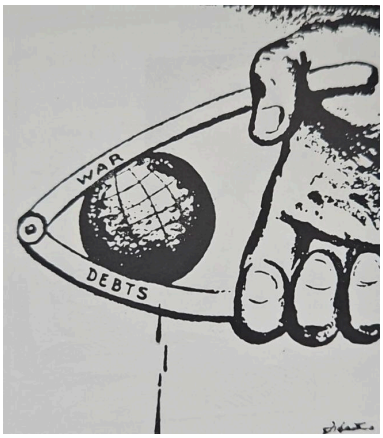
(281)

In 1929, Poincare tried to charm the dollar snake with gentle ways.

(282)

The president of the United States turned a stony face to the debtors. The "Hoover Face Construction Company" was run by the American Congress, which did its best to give Hoover's face the look of unwilling, annoyed refusal.

All the curses have been pronounced over the USA that are enacted in this world over hard-hearted creditors. People have spoken of the “golden heart” of the USA: it was not meant as lyrical praise.



(283)

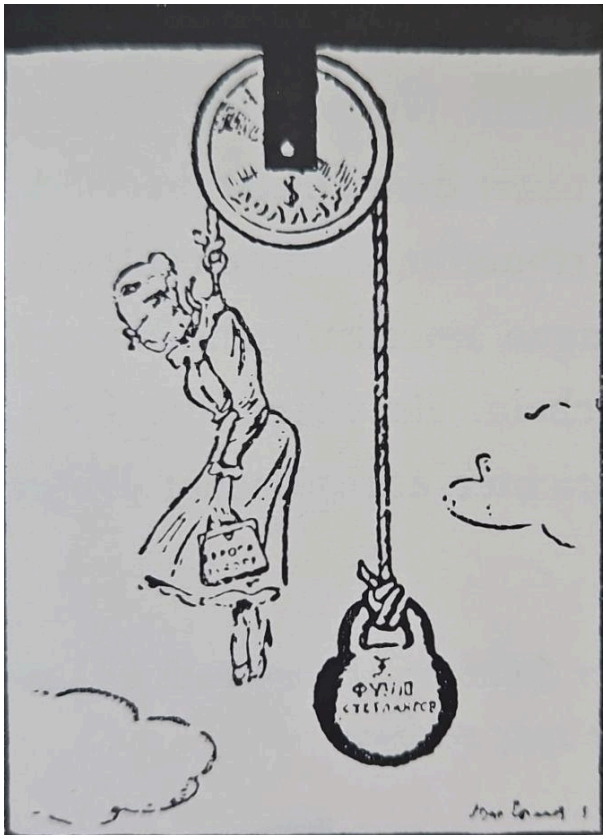
The debt crisis has gripped the world in a merciless vice. How much blood, asks the American illustrator, must be squeezed?

(284)

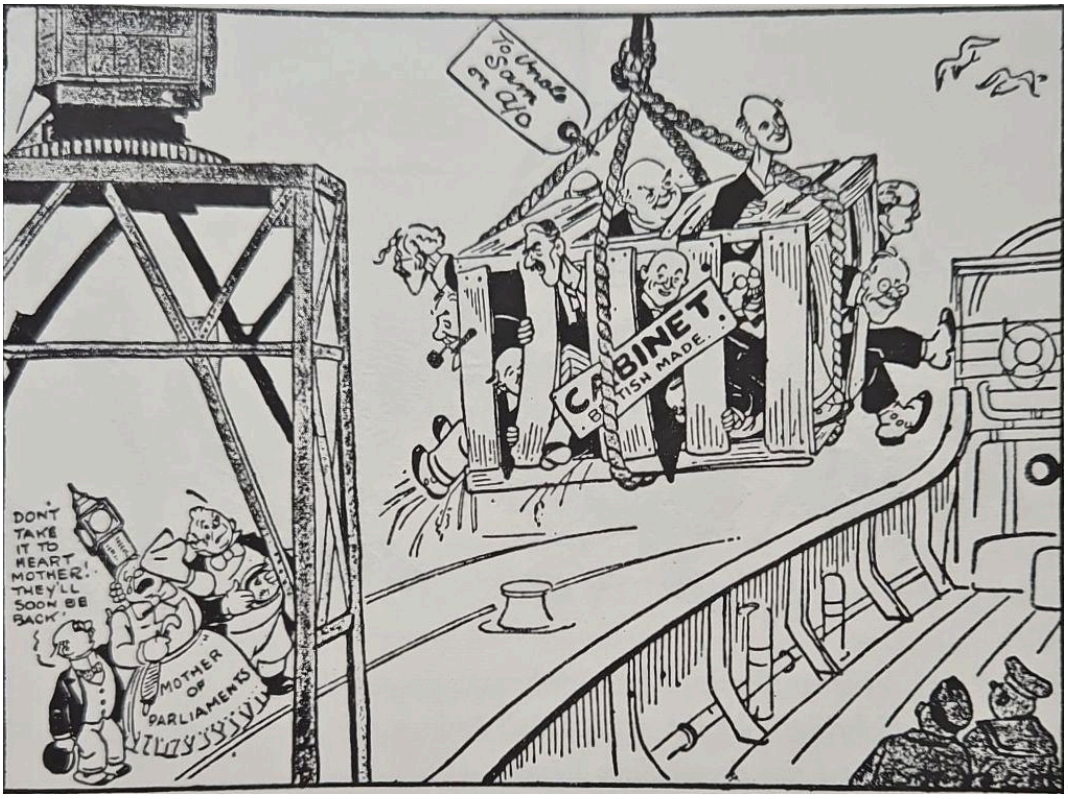
Morgan's money bag was passed around, only this time it was not given for the poor, but by the poor.

(285)

Uncle Sam is wearing, the French caricature was indignant, glasses that darken his view of the world.

 (286)

As it was opportune, the Soviet Union has incited violence against the ruthless "world capital powers". Europe is stabilized by the English pound in the role of the dollar.



(287)

The USA has remained firm. When money was no longer available, they suggested payment in goods. An English cartoonist responded by suggesting that the new reconstruction cabinet of England be sent to the USA as the first installment of the in-kind payments; the weeping mother of parliaments is consoled: "Don't take it to heart, mother; we'll get them back soon anyway."

America Triumphant

As a world creditor, the USA seemed to become the master of the world. The reparation treaties were almost concluded under the dictate of the USA. Many tribute agreements (Dawes Plan, Young Plan) bear American names. It often seems as if the USA has become the great arbiter of European affairs.

(288)

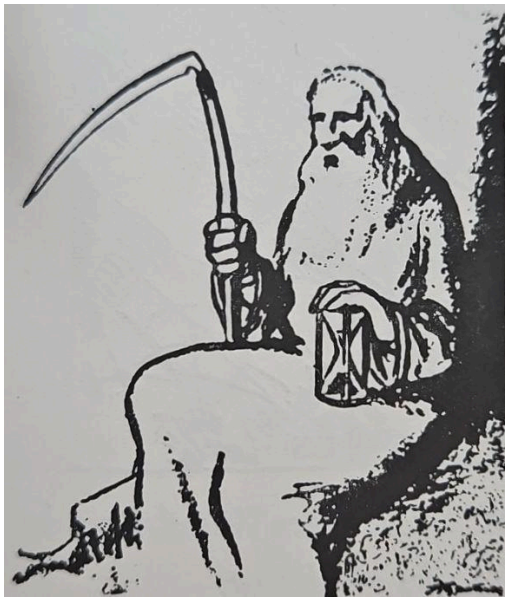
Thus, in 1924, one could draw a strange still life: "Europe after the London Conference".

(289)

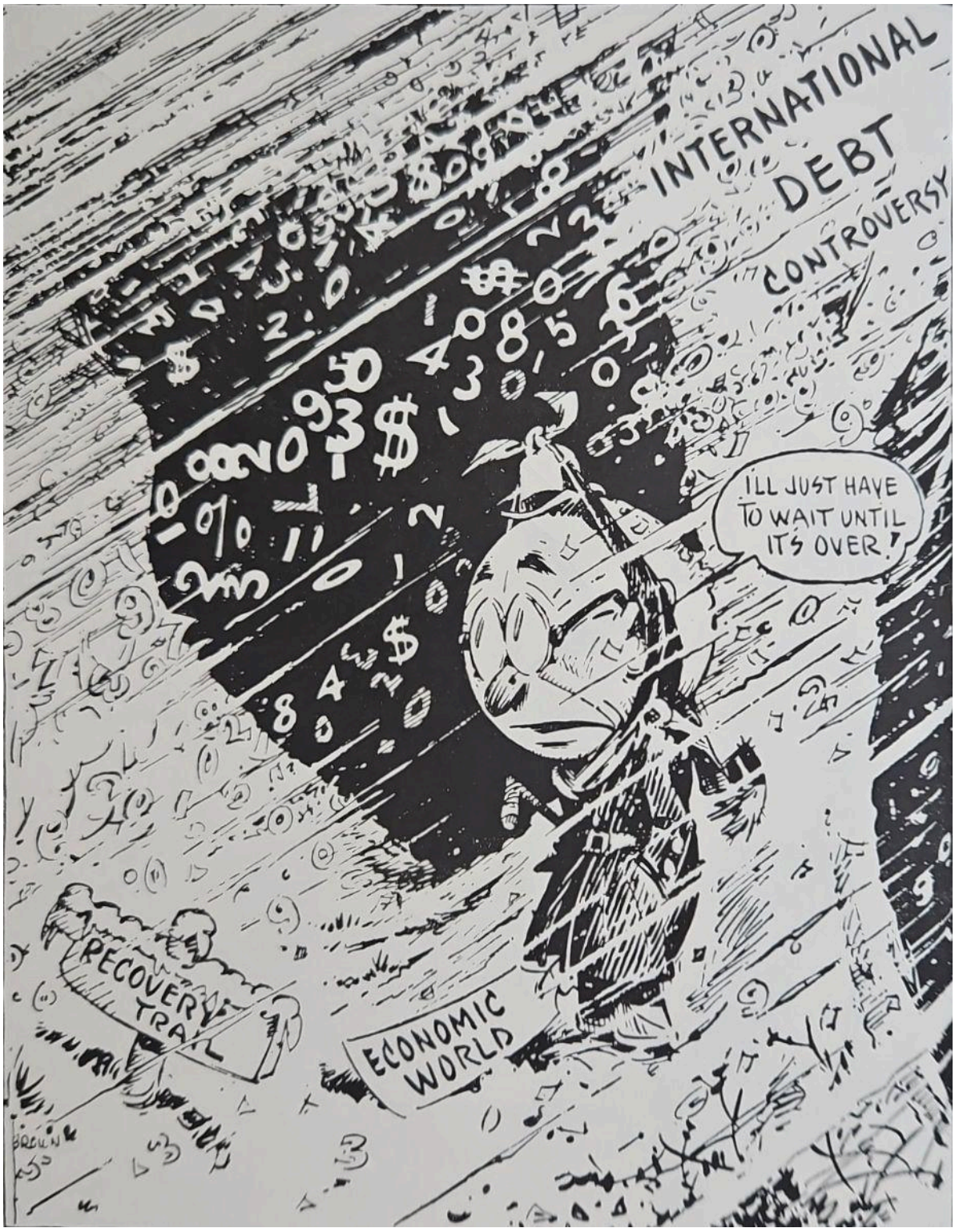
In the rugby of the international economic contest, the USA refereed. But it was this referee who ran off with the ball. The international guessing game, "Who has the ball?" found a peculiar ending.

(290)

Germany seemed to succumb to American capital: Mephisto ensnared Gretchen.


(291)

In this Soviet Russian caricature, it echoed the cry of "Stop the thief!" so that it could gain a foothold all the more easily; an invitation to flee to a plague-stricken area before an influenza epidemic. The power of the USA over Europe has since diminished enormously. Time is an even more powerful arbiter than the USA, and perhaps it was she who ran off with the ball. God Kronos, the god of time with the hourglass and the sickle, will probably be the one to pay the debt and the guilt, the debt from the great war and the great guilt of the victors of Versailles, to fate.



(292)

The international debt issue, along with the currency confusion, brought a whirlwind of numbers. The world of business thought, "I'll just wait until it's all over."

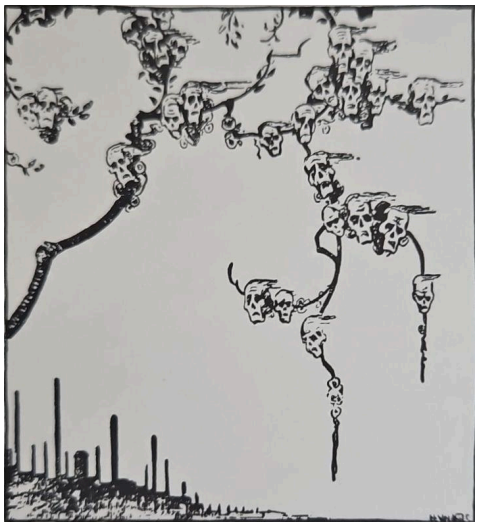
7. The Global Economic Crisis

“The world economic crisis comes from Versailles.”
- Hjalmar Schacht on August 30th, 1934

The Global Economic Crisis

“Five years ago, at exactly the same time, the columns of a temple that seemed destined to defy the centuries collapsed with a tremendous roar. Countless fortunes vanished into thin air; many did not survive the disaster. The collapse means not only the demise of a greater or lesser number of individuals, but the end of an era in contemporary history, the end of that era that can be called the era of liberal capitalist economy.”

- Mussolini in his speech to the workers of Milan, October 6th, 1934



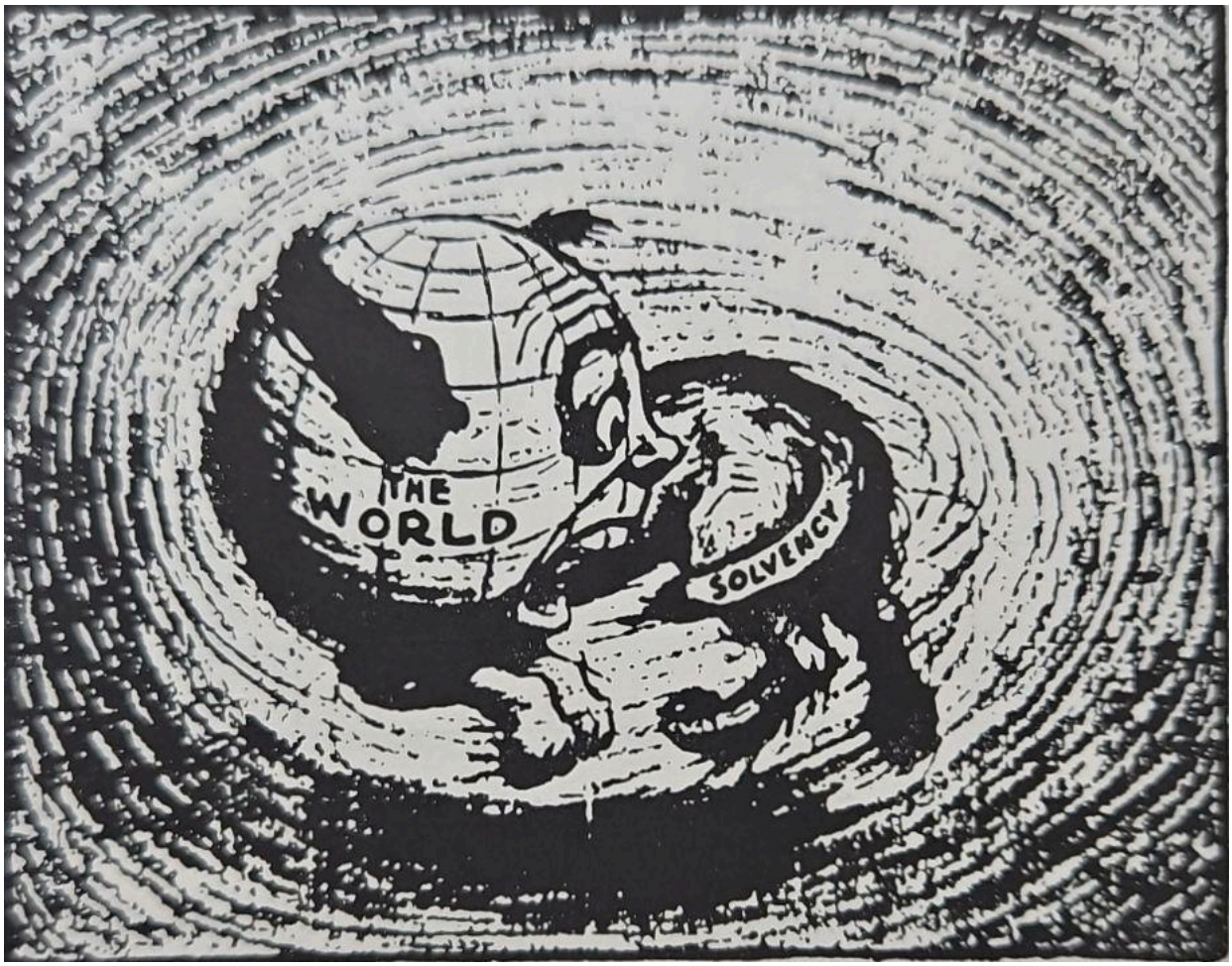
(293)

In 1929, the world economic crisis began to spread around the world like a great earthquake. It has not yet ended; some have saved themselves by courageous and decisive action. But the flood itself has not yet receded.

This crisis has struck the earth like a true scourge of God. It has deprived millions and millions of people of work and their daily bread; for years, the tree of unemployment bore a terrible, cruel fruit. Youth grew up without support or work; huge lines of tired and desperate people formed in front of unemployment offices and offices providing financial assistance: a terrible question mark over the culture of the 20th century. Misery spread from idle factories. It seized the farmer; his sales stagnated while hunger spread through the cities; the prices of agricultural products plummeted, while the debts remained and the state needed more taxes than ever in order to be able to throw a few crumbs into its big mouth every now and then, giving a few days' reprieve before the catastrophe.

Was it a crisis like the others, of which there have been countless since the existence of capitalism and which capitalism has repeatedly overcome, with all the often terrible sacrifices? Should this time the old liberal capitalism itself remain on the battlefield? In the collapsing world economy, “people's and national economies” now came back into favor. The state no longer appeared in the economy merely in the form of the penal code and the Red Cross, which steers the wounded from the battlefield and does not merely march behind them as a paramedic. In a great world revolution, the trail of which passes through almost all states on earth, the state is once again seizing its privileges and rights.

The storm tide and its roaring whirlpools, in which a world sinks, will accompany us on the following pages. Many still look out for the lost land, while here and there individual peaks of national power are already forming again, on which people can begin a new life.



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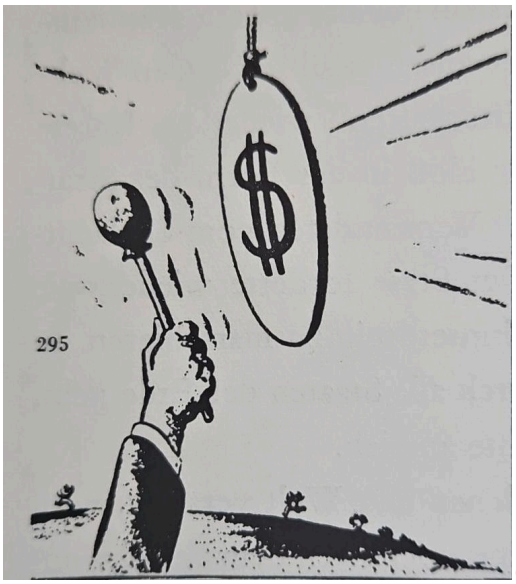
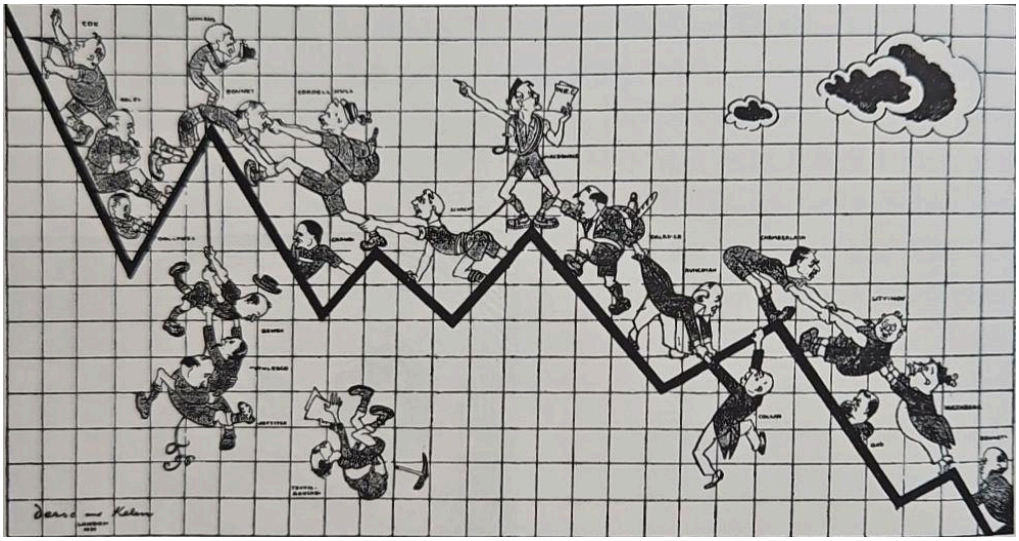
The Global Economic Conference



(295)

In 1933, a global economic conference was held in an attempt to solve the crisis. Two thousand delegates from sixty countries were present at this conference when the USA struck the gong for the opening. There was no lack of spirited speeches; but a straightforward decision was needed, not a multitude of brilliant wisdoms. The World Economic Conference ended with many assurances of good will that moved nothing but the air into which they were spoken.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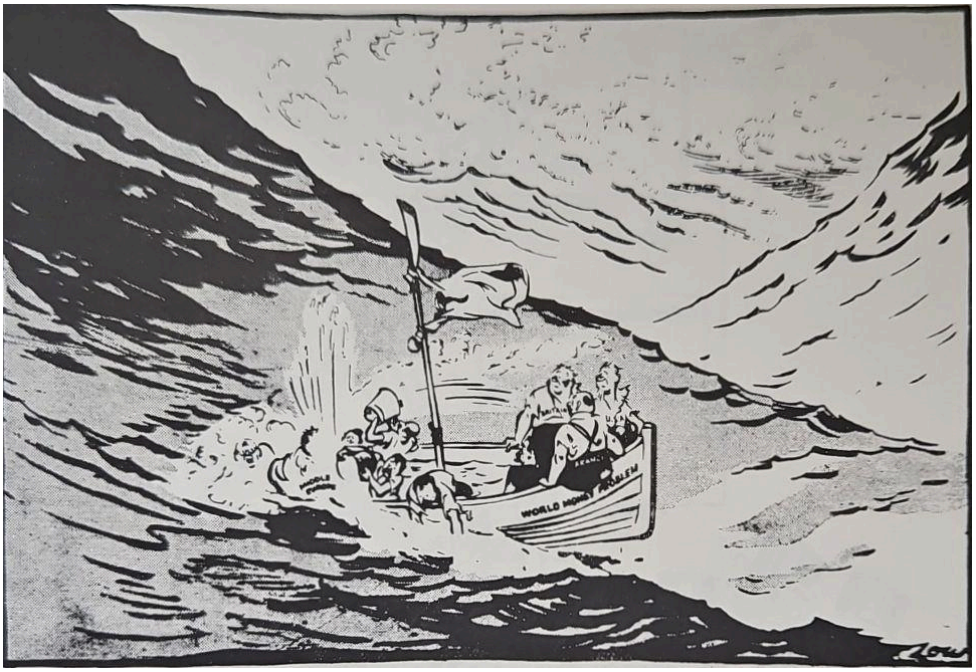
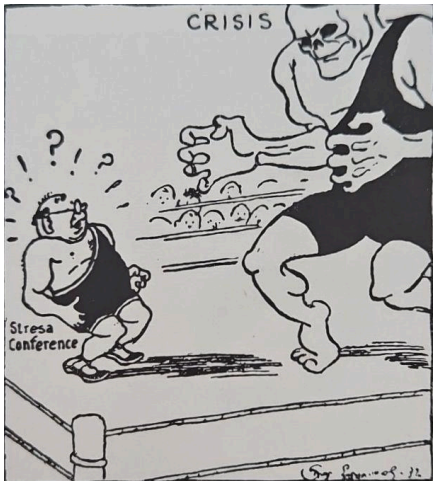
The spectacle of the conference was not without its charms. The image presented by the London Conference seemed to be that of statesmen in the Alps of crisis; an image that invites us to linger and enjoy the delightful memories.



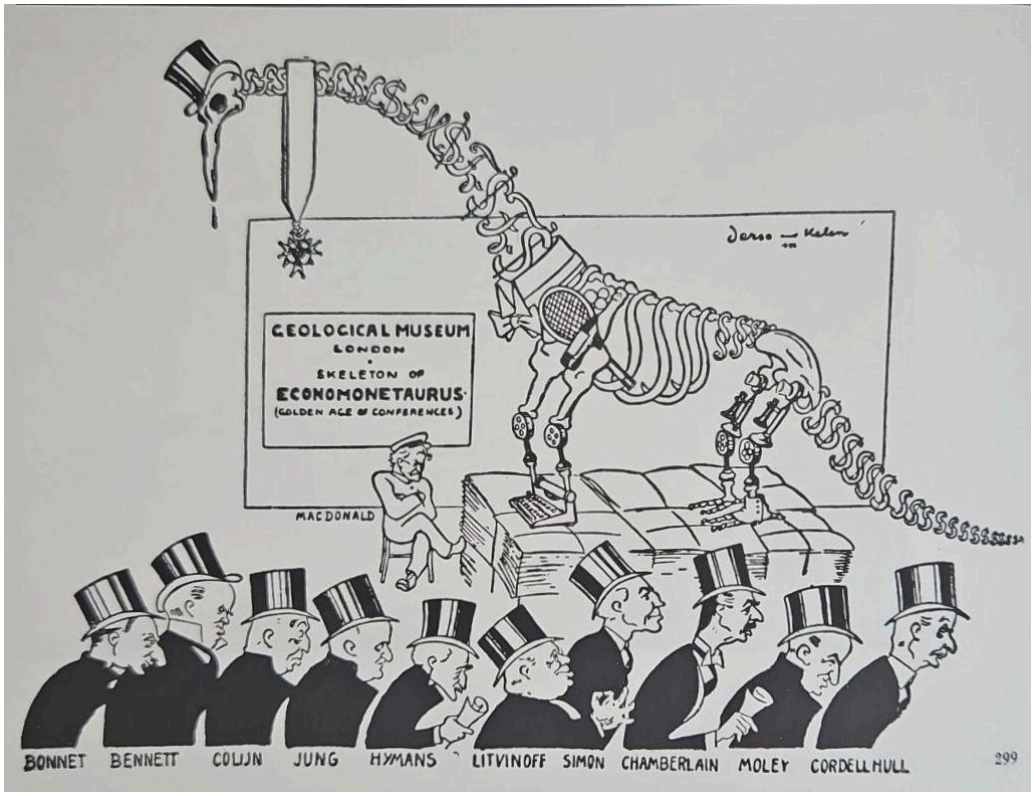
(297)

During the great storm, the nations did not help each other much, and only occasionally shouted about the "isolation mania" when someone helped themselves. The (1932!) monetarily strong states (USA, England, France) could exclaim about the currency emergency in Central Europe: "A nasty leak! Thank God it's not on our side of the ship!"



(298)

Bolshevik caricature triumphed during such economic conferences, which seemed just as likely to stop the great world crisis as straw is to stop a fire. Here, the Stresa Economic Conference, one of many, appears as a mad undertaking when it challenges the crisis (that is: death, Bolshevism) to a world championship fight.



(299)

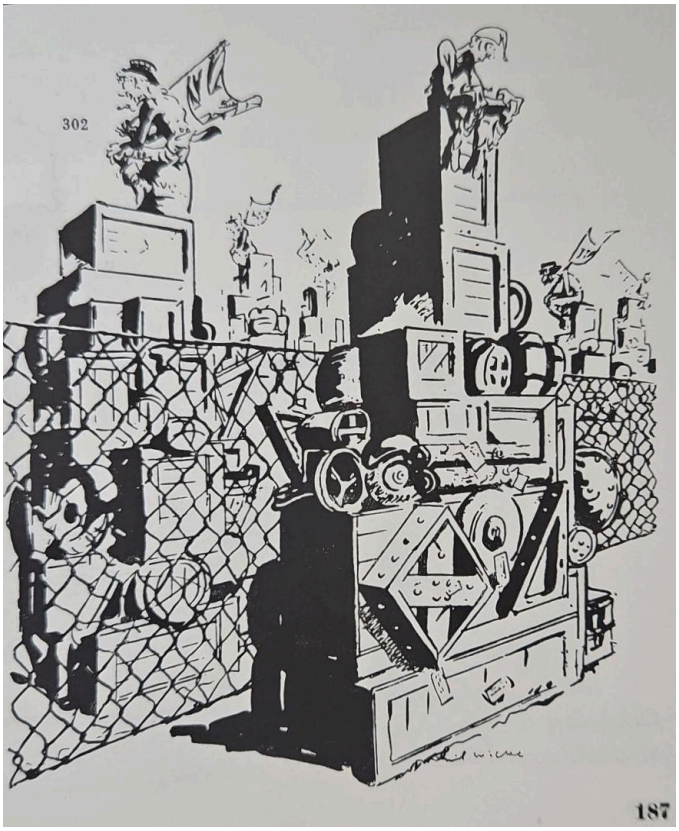
The only thing left of the World's Economic Conference, on a pedestal of files, was a prehistoric monster that is on display in the Geological Museum in London.

(300)

The exhortations of the chairman of the conference, MacDonald, regarding the world depression had remained fruitless. It did not rise from the trumpet on which the great awakening was to be blown.

(301)

The conference did not lower the customs walls by a single millimeter, nor did it offer the slightest check to their skyward urge. The earth remained trapped in the pincer of customs barriers.

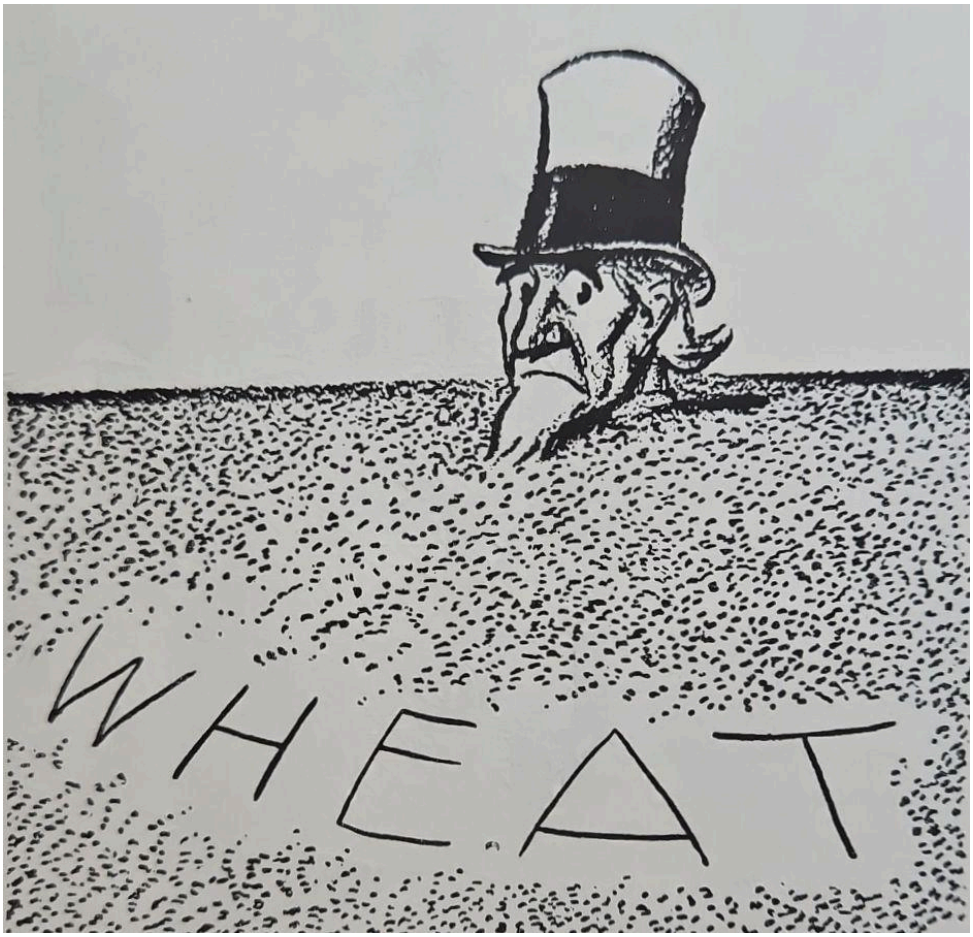


(302)

At most, the mountains of goods that could no longer be sold grew beyond the walls of customs, and the powers that be reflected on the saying that the strong are strongest alone.

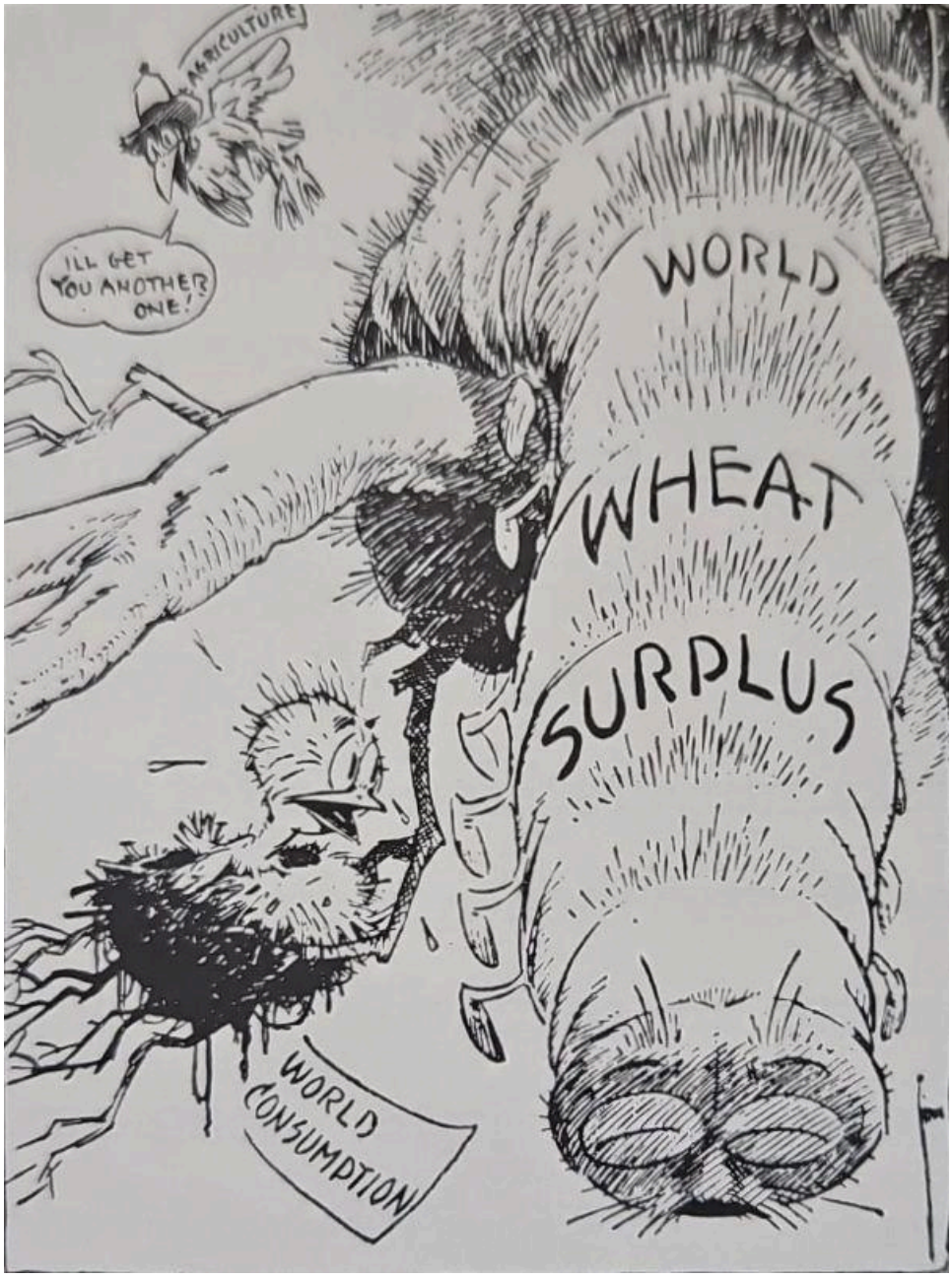
Abundance and Scarcity

One of the most perverse paradoxes of the capitalist world economy is the coexistence of affluence and poverty. Wheat is being burned while hundreds of thousands lack their daily bread; in addition, there is the unequal distribution of the earth's raw materials, which divides the world into haves and have-nots. Gold accumulates at certain points on the planet until some states become the new Midas, whom everything he touches, food and drink, turns into gold. Here there is emaciation, there obesity.



(303)

Uncle Sam is drowning in wheat.



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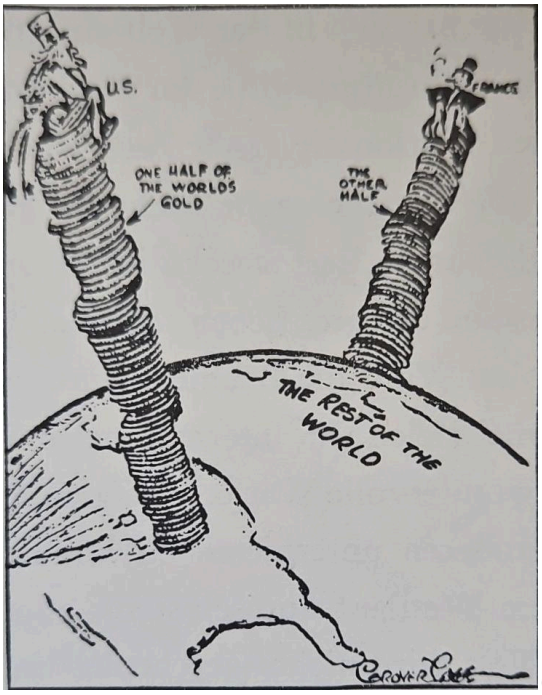
The worm of the world's wheat surplus has become too big and indigestible for the chick that is world consumption.



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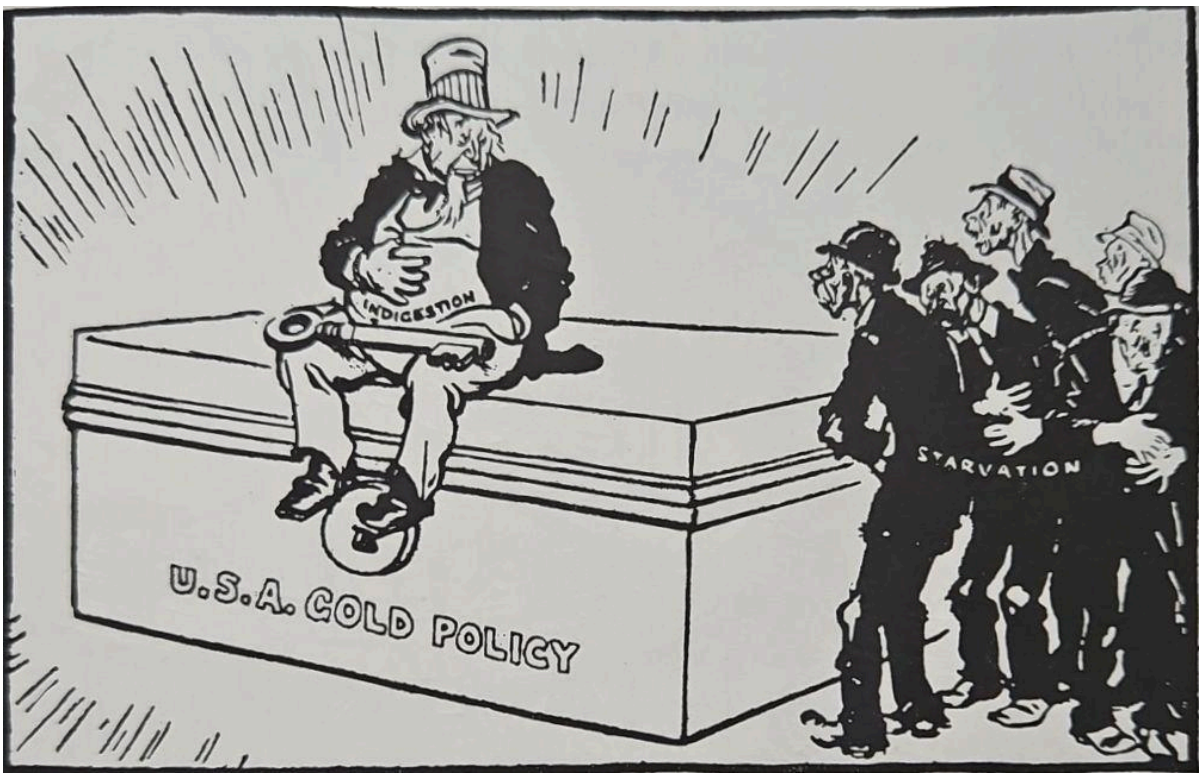
For a long time, the United States and France shared ownership of the world's gold supply.

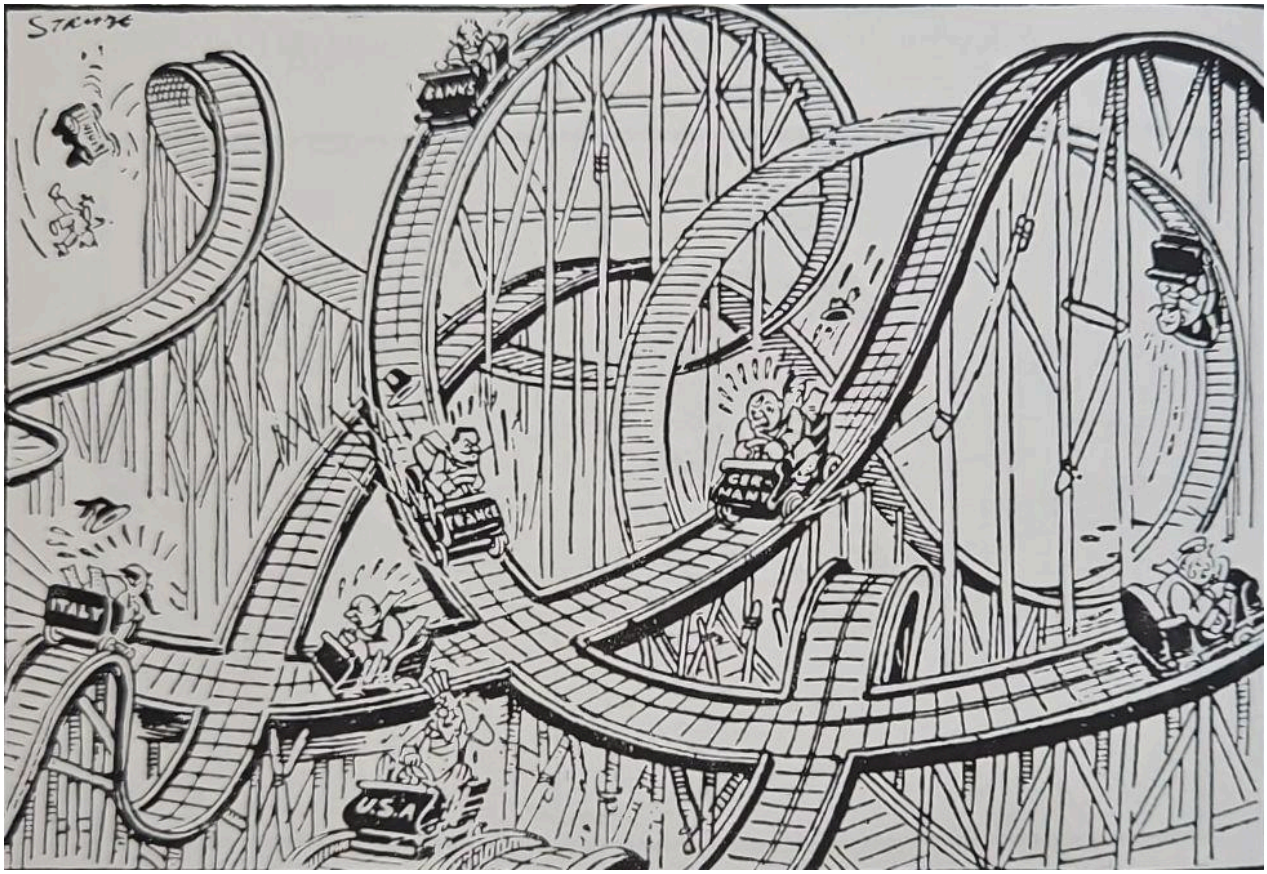


(306)

The USA jealousy and anxiously guarded its gold treasure, yet suffered from the same digestive problems as the starving world.

Currency Chaos

Never before has the world seen such confusion as in the monetary policy of the post-war years. In domestic economic policy, inflation has been the great donkey bridge for bad policy, over which some have even stopped neighing. The money press has unleashed a new, if feverish and agitated life, that has seemed to come among men as a mysterious wind shook the trees, the banknotes falling like manna from heaven. In the international economic struggle, inflation appeared as a wonderful weapon; it was believed that it would be possible to undercut the others in the race for world markets, and it was only realized too late that in this race one had only pumped oneself dry to the last. In this world, nothing is given away, and at some point, it always has to be paid for.



(307)

This is how an English illustrator saw the world's monetary policy.

(308)

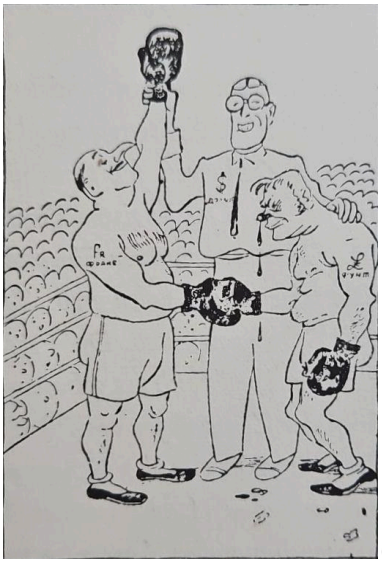
Economic policy was replaced by artifice. "Ice skating on frozen credit" appeared in 1932 as an episode of the political vaudeville called Europe.

In the upper left corner, the Italian Finance Minister [Antonio] Mosconi is practicing the headstand. On the right: Finance Minister [Hermann] Dietrich has fallen, and the director of the Bank of France, [Clément] Moret, contemplates the misadventures of his colleagues. [Gates] McGarrah, director of the Bank for International Settlements, glides with not quite a wholesome swing, while Dr. [Carl] Melchior clings to his hat. The Belgian finance magnate [Émile] Francqui turns around and thinks he is going forward. The American financial dictators Morgan and Young have mastered the noble art of ice skating quite well and draw large numbers on the ice. The American Secretary of the Treasury, [Andrew] Mellon, excels as a contortionist. The President of the United States, Hoover, avoids the sinful art of skating and devotes himself to the useful occupation of sweeping the ice rink with frozen legs. When painting the sign for the pound sterling, it is apparently easy to dislocate, as Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, does. [Philip] Snowden, a new member of the English House of Lords, with a billowing ermine coat, turns the Governor of the Bank of England, Montague Norman, with whom he has had many a major dispute, around in circles. [Pierre] Laval and [Pierre-Étienne] Flandin are running with great momentum. Under Dr. [Hans] Luther and [Heinrich] Brüning, the ice begins to break in the form of a Hakenkreuz*. The English Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, walks in his usual elegant manner, with one foot in front of the other.

*A "hakenkreuz" is a hooked cross, or as seen here, a Nazi swastika.

(309)

The world's monetary confusion often turns people into little better than gangs of robbers who pounce on tourists, whose money inflation conjures countless zeros, like smoke rising from a cannibal's pot. Thus, in the accompanying English drawing, the chiefs of French politics, adorned with loincloths made of pretty French inflation francs, examine an English tourist for his usefulness as a meal: "Tourists are received and prepared," reveals a welcoming sign.

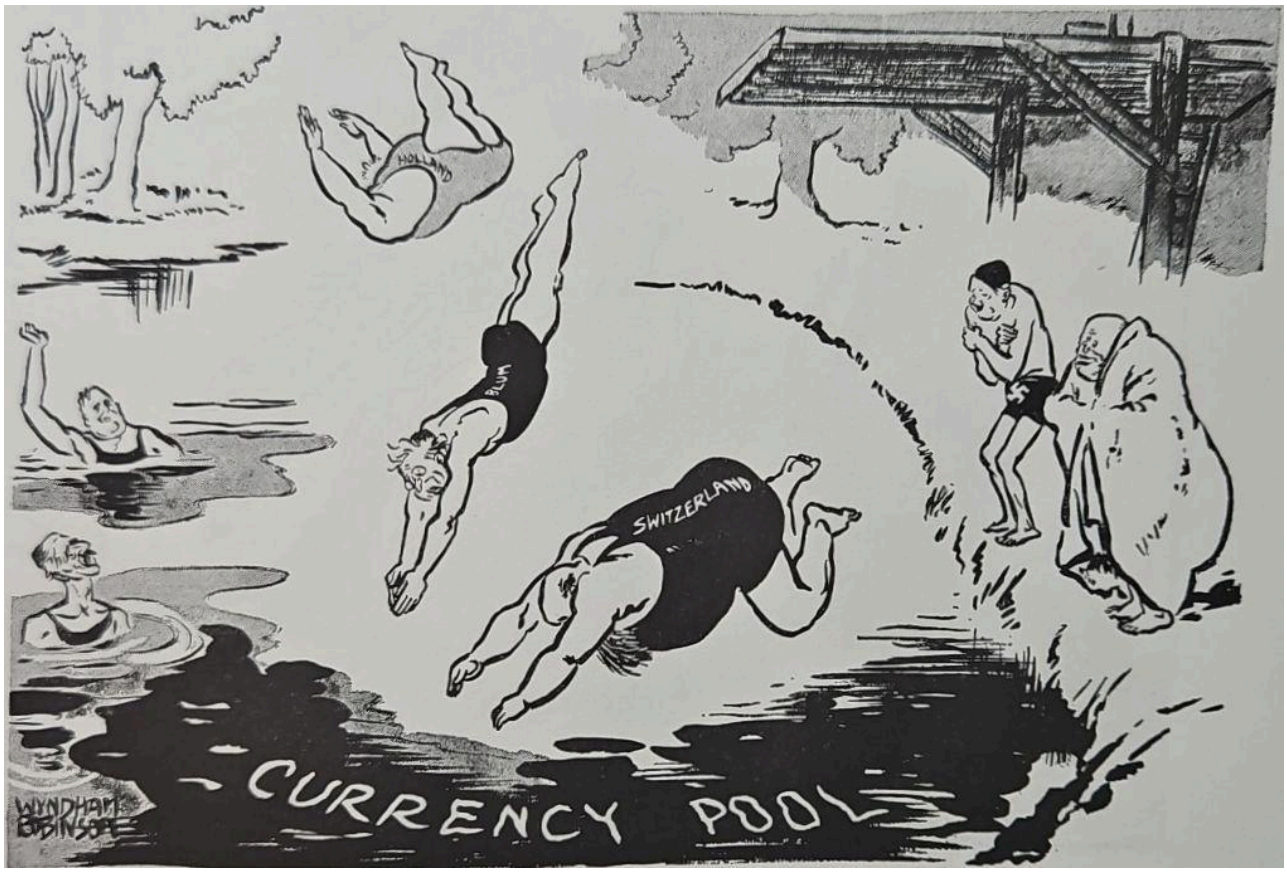

(310)

In 1931, there was a boxing match between the franc and the pound sterling, with the dollar playing a not entirely impartial role as referee.

(311)

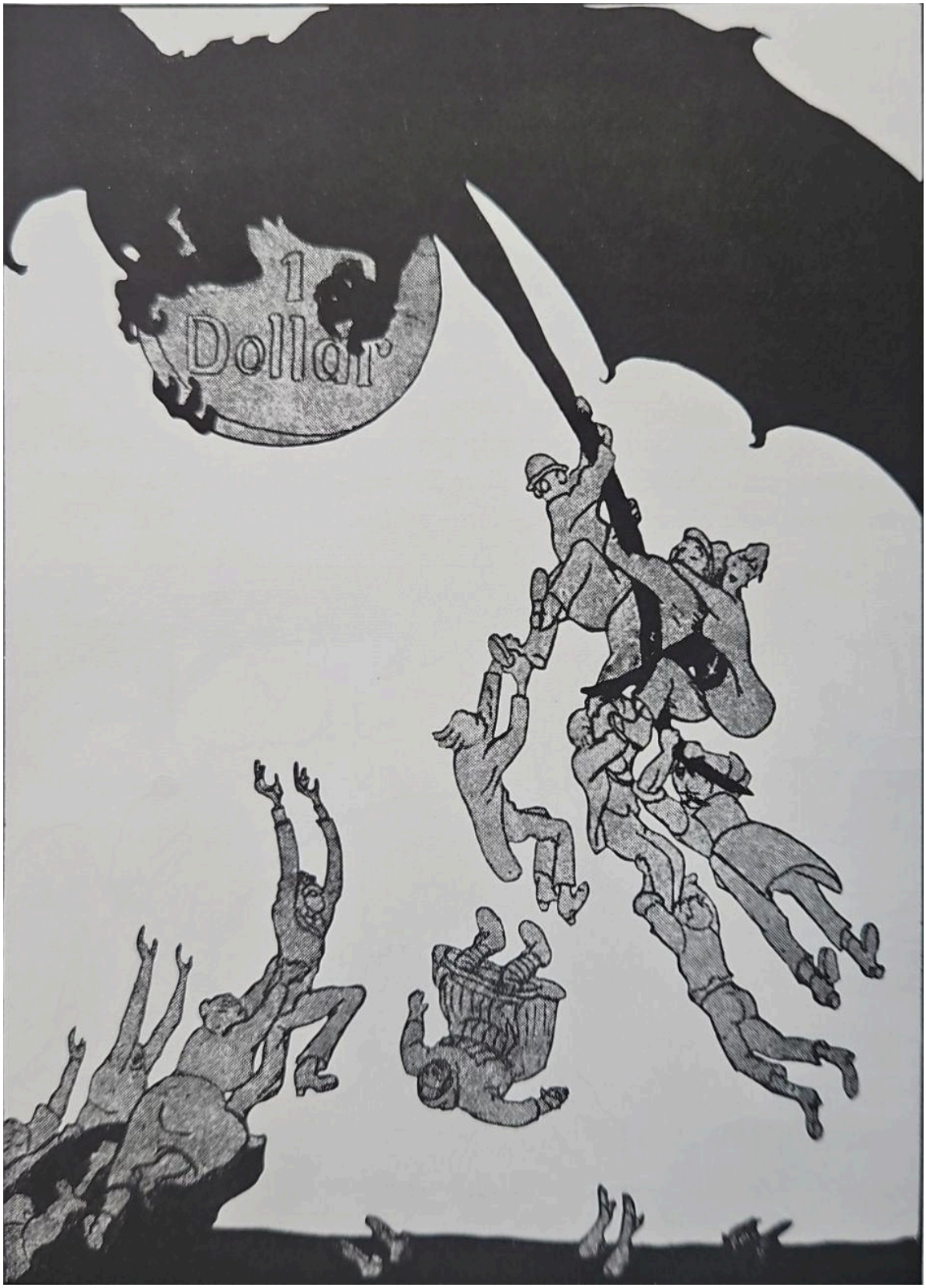
In 1933, the pound and the dollar went head to head.

Since almost all powers were involved in the counterfeiting of inflation, those who did not howl with the wolves were met with regret or schadenfreude.



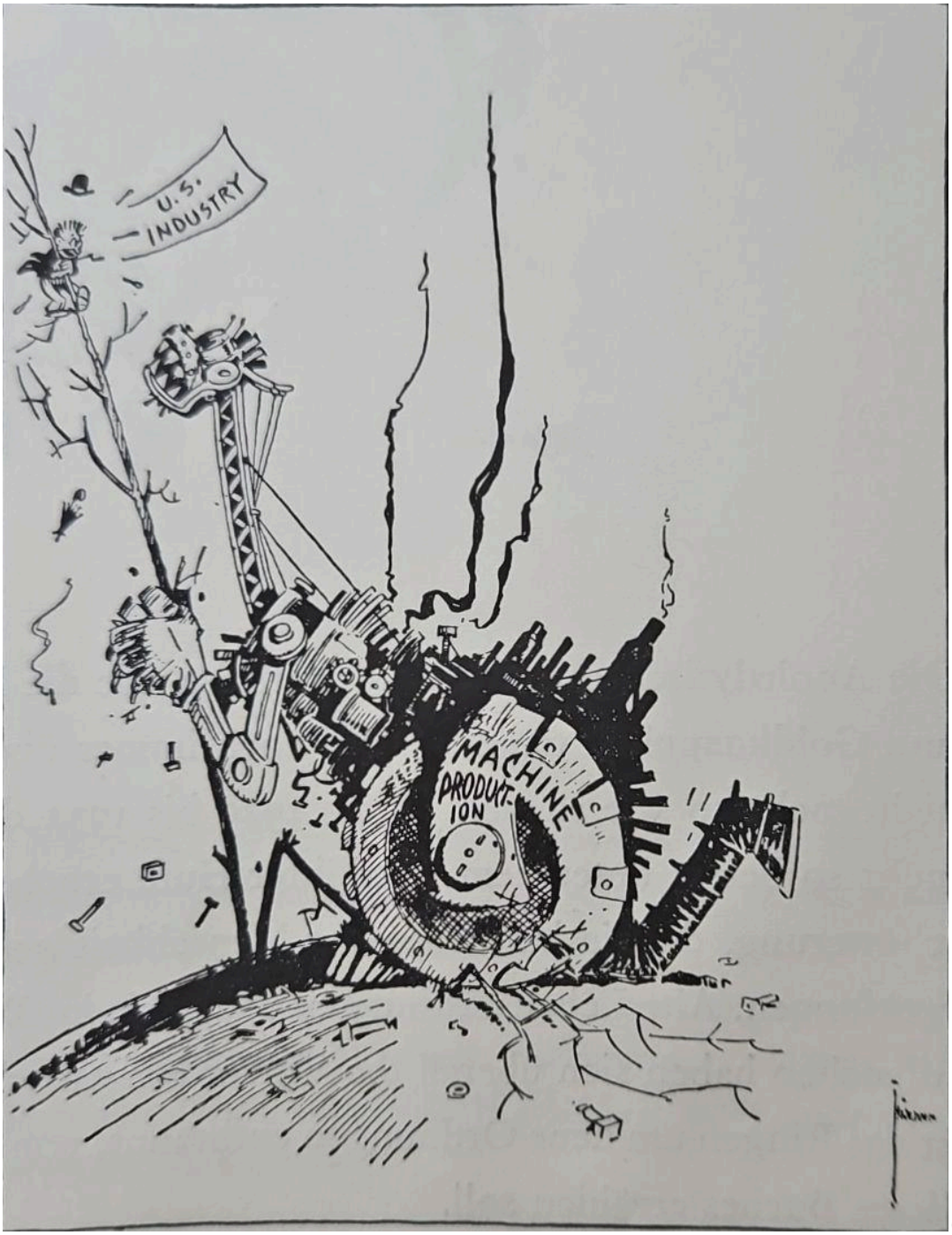
(312)

It was thought necessary to show smiling sympathy for the "authoritarian states" that had not joined the 1936 currency agreement at all, like Germany, or only joined it later, like Italy, and that were now supposedly shivering on the shore; meanwhile in the nice, cozy swamp of devaluation, England and the USA are waiting for the others, and France, Holland and Switzerland are elegantly jumping into the pool. Unfortunately, countless "devalued" savings have also been thrown into this pleasant swamp with varying degrees of elegance. Millions of savers would probably have preferred to be outside this swamp, which the heads of state found comfortably warm "once you jump in".



(313)

The German Reich, in any case, will not sell itself to the speculative devil of the inflation years again.



(314)

One of the symptoms of the world economic crisis is runaway machine production. The machine had gone from being a servant to being a master. The robot, once a creature and an invention of man, now seemed to be beating down on man. Between the regressive machines and its idolatrous worship by many, humanity now had to find its own way. Particularly in the United States, the cult of machines has taken on an orgiastic character. According to the American design, a spooky, monstrous being made of steel and iron eats away at the greening life and pursues the creative, living human being.

(315)

The apocalyptic horsemen of the world crisis, whose names are war, tariffs, tributes and gold scarcity, are still hunting across the earth. Their hoofbeats may no longer thunder as they did in the years 1929 to 1932; the earth may no longer tremble as violently under the kick of their hooves; but the great, deep shock they have brought to the life of humanity has not yet subsided. Old ways of life have been shaken; nations have set out to seek new paths. All over the world, the struggle for new systems has broken out, which the next section of this book will tell about.

Global Conflagration and Global Crisis

1. Bolshevism and the World

"Recognizing that the aim of the Communist International, called the Comintern, is the destruction and administration of existing states by all available means, we are convinced that tolerating interference by the Communist International in the internal affairs of nations not only endangers their domestic peace and social well-being, but also poses a threat to world peace…"

- Preamble of the German-Japanese Agreement of November 25th, 1936

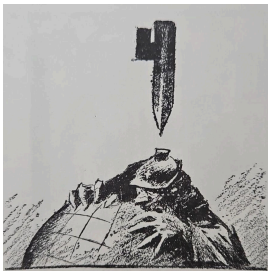
The Global Bolshevik Menace

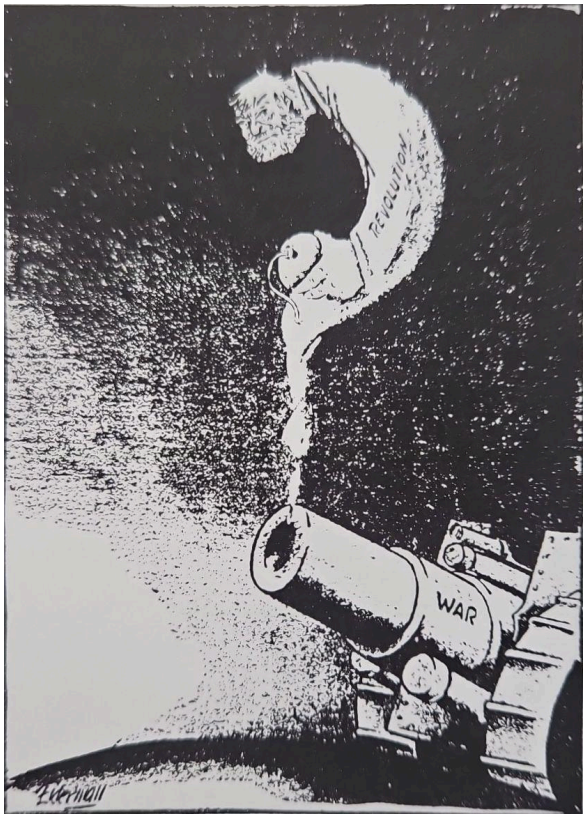
"Communism means the most thoroughgoing negation of all ideas on which our existence and our life are based in every field - religion, morality, society, politics, economics. Most states prohibit communist propaganda, but all consider it a state crime as soon as it attempts to put its theory into practice.
Soviet Communism fights religious ideas and the clergy in all their forms. Lenin compared religion to opium. Freedom of conscience exists only in name. The clergy and their families do not receive ration cards. The places of worship are no longer used for their original purpose and are falling into disrepair. There were once five hundred churches and chapels in Moscow; today, only forty are said to remain! Christian churches around the world are deeply shocked by the plight of their fellow believers in Russia; in Switzerland, the so-called martyr petition was signed by more than 200,000 people last year. Communism dissolves family ties; it rejects individual initiative; it suppresses private property. It organizes work in forms that can hardly be distinguished from forced labor. Its goal is world revolution. Nature and will impel it to propaganda abroad. Dissemination beyond political borders is its law of life. If it renounces this, it denies itself. If it remains true to itself, it becomes the enemy of all, for it threatens us all."

- **The Swiss Federal Councilor [Giuseppe] Motta before the League of Nations on September 17th, 1934**

While the nations were still facing each other in the trenches of the world war, they all had a common, terrible enemy - Bolshevism. Never in history has the West faced such a tremendous danger. A demonic power has declared war on all, able and willing to release all the forces of hell, allied with all the forces of the abyss. The world's clairvoyant spirits see a devilish grimace, and a deep terror, like an apocalyptic horror, has seized them. The face of Bolshevism is also a grimace in caricature. When you look through the caricatures of the world on Bolshevism, you get the impression that the devil and hell stare back in the mirror.

The authoritarian states of Europe are the great dike against which the wave of Bolshevism has broken. If the border wall between Germany and Italy were to be swept away, the flood of mud and blood could break into the valley with full force. Therefore, the main impact of Bolshevism is directed against this border wall. The emblem of the authoritarian states hangs over Bolshevism like the sword of Damocles when it claws at the earth.

 (316)



(317)

Bolshevism leaped with all its might upon the peoples worn down by world war. It always considered the war of the peoples to be its best ally – Lenin said this with dry, terrible words. The spirit of world revolution has thus escaped from the gun barrels of war; the smoke of the guns has formed itself into the eerie figure of social upheaval.

(318)

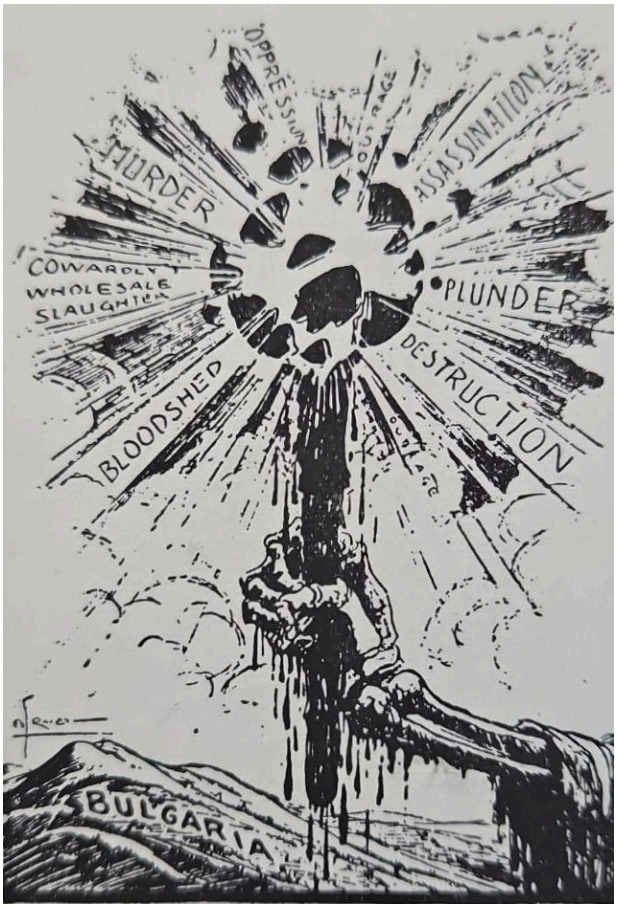
In countless strikes, the great world conflagration hurled its signals upwards. Terrible dangers await when the state authority itself is often "on strike".

(319)

Suddenly, political flu epidemics broke out. The clever doctors then raised the test tubes to the light and opined that the cause of the disease had not yet been found.

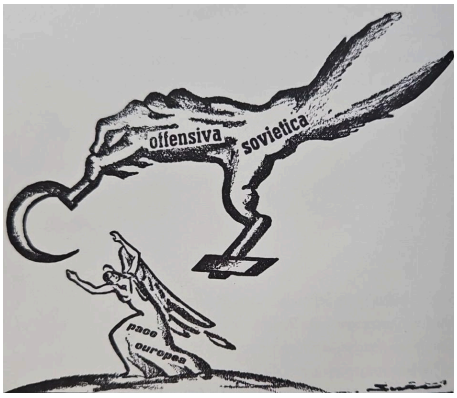
(320)

Such epidemics then spurred on "reform". In some states, parliamentarism, which was in tatters, was "reformed" by a new parliamentary procedure. The lords were then seen busily painting the collapsing walls and enjoying the beautiful new color of the house under which they were soon to be buried.



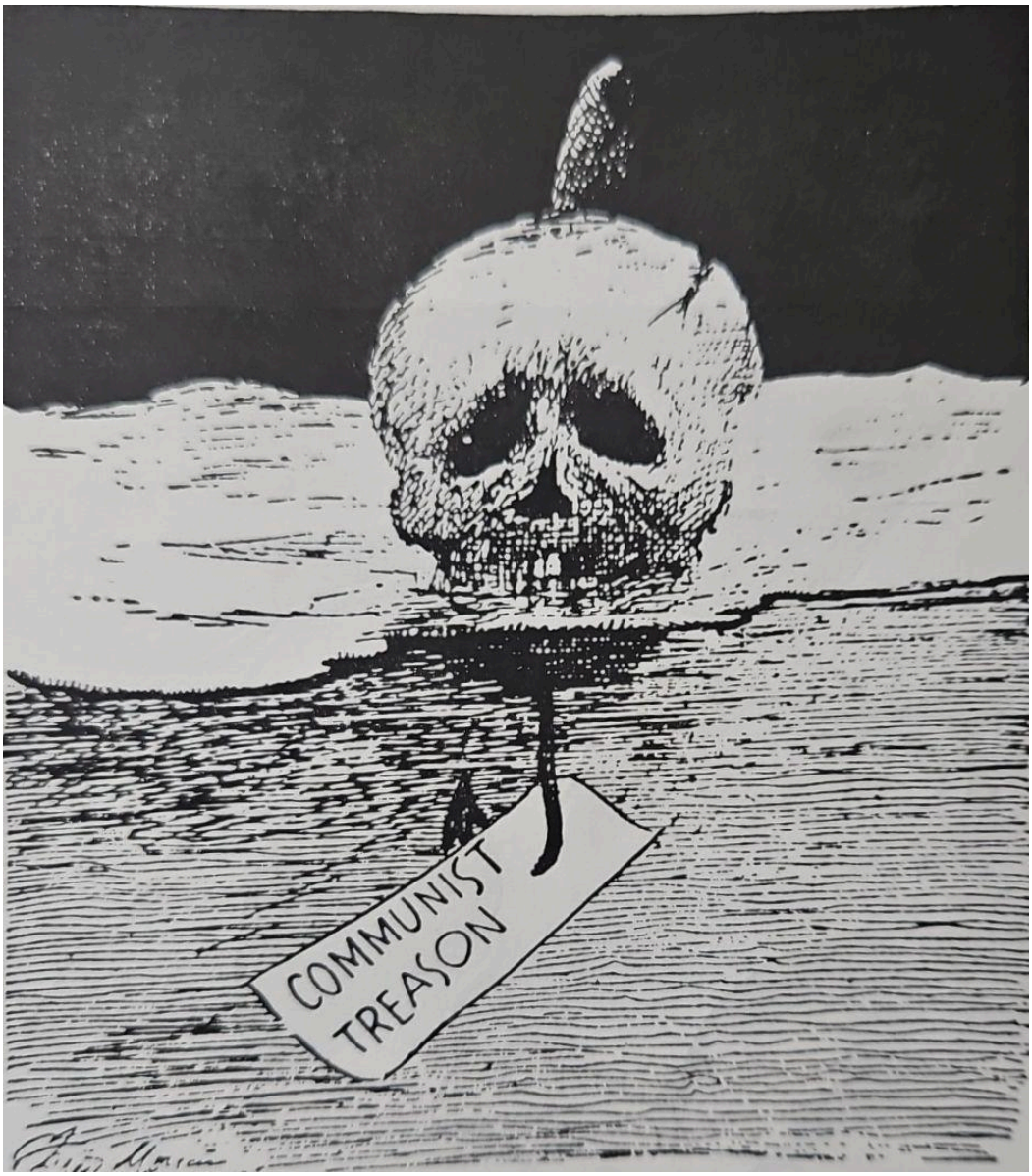
(321)(322)

Chaos opened its gates. Communism let its "torch of freedom" shine, which crashed and hurled its firebrand into the land. Lenin summoned spirits that he could no longer get rid of and no longer wanted to get rid of: anarchy, hunger, decomposition, plague.



(323)

A sinister claw of hammer and sickle reached for European peace.



(324)

The horrible fishhooks of Bolshevism are cast all over the world.

The history of the earth since the war has been characterized by a great world danger, whether the flood beat against the walls in a raging storm or whether it seeped in quietly, stirring. There are nations that pride themselves on their "immunity", perhaps rightly so – as long as the world's quarantine states are intact. But many nations are facing more immediate and pressing decisions, and the life of nations is not a leisurely stroll along a broad, level road, but a walk along a narrow ridge, where inattention is paid for with destruction.

"Do not lie down to sleep in a snowstorm!" - Adolf Hitler

The Bolshevik Paradise

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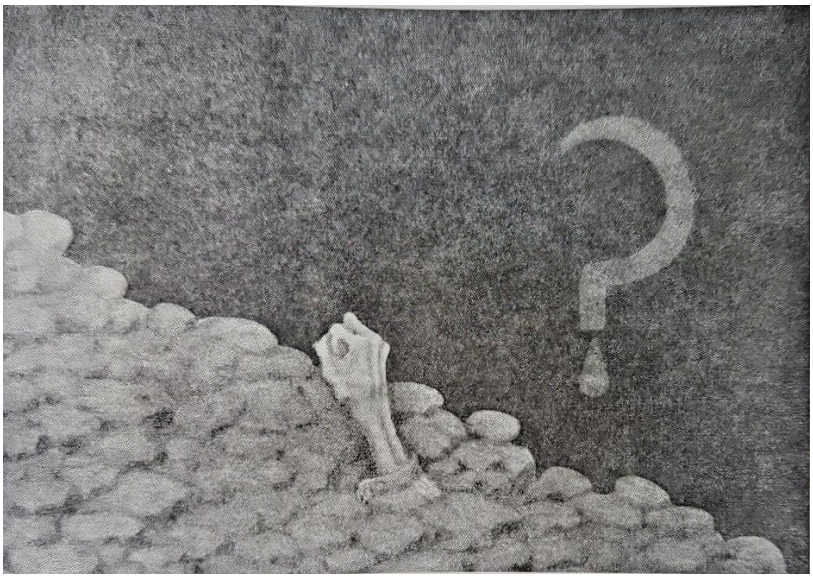
A "state of workers and peasants," Bolshevik propaganda proclaimed, "has been established as the fatherland of all the world's toilers. A new 'holy Russia' is to be created and a new 'Russified man' is to arise: a terrible, lecherous specter."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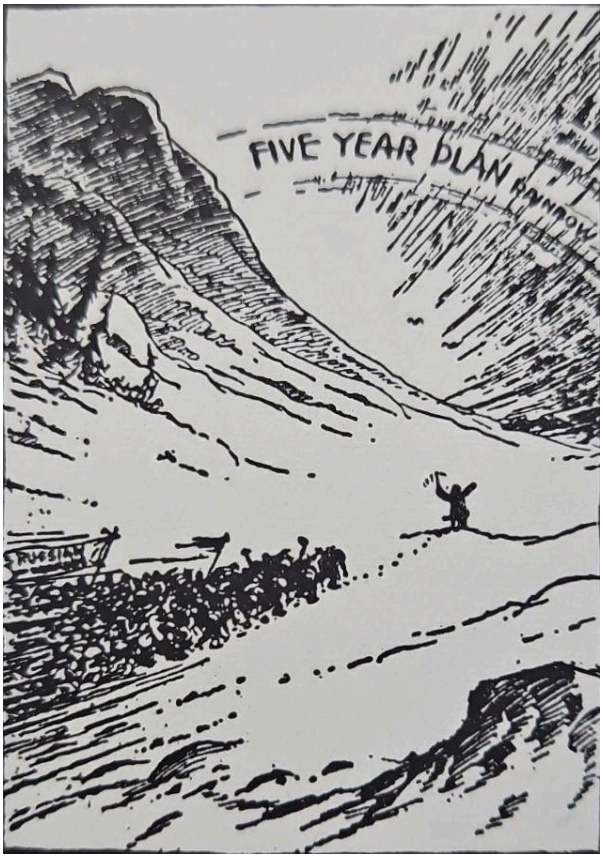
The clenched fist was to become the new greeting of humanity. But millions have clenched their fists in the death grip of this "greeting"; from millions of graves this fist shall greet. Above them stands the sickle like a big question mark, with a drop of blood as the full stop.



(327)

Russia wanders through a terrible desert - following the rainbow of the five-year plan.

(328)

Suddenly, another migration intervenes: the great "internal migration of Soviet Russia", as an Italian cartoon says; the migration of endless columns to Siberia.

(329)

People migrate in gray trains: hundreds of thousands of political prisoners, who are to build the great canal to the White Sea in the icy wastes of northern Russia.

(330)

Finally, a procession like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow arises before the mind's eye. When the country was burnt to a desert by communism, the way back was sought, and the military report was no different than during Napoleon's retreat: the army is defeated; the emperor is well.

(331)

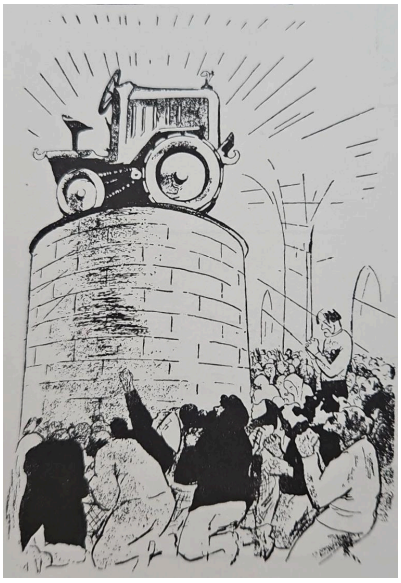
The division of land was the bait with which Bolshevism lured the peasants behind it: the rainbow that shone before them in that terrible migration. Eventually the "Bolshevik Agrarian Revolution" came over the Russian peasants, through which millions of Russian peasants, women and men, became workers on state-owned estates and which brought a repeated terrible famine over city and country. This was the result of that "distribution of the land".

The Five-Year Plan

Despite all of this, the Soviet Union was buzzing with feverish activity. The five-year plans are, after all, the great promise of the Soviet government.

(332)

With the honeybee of the five-year plan, the Soviet government has lured the Russian bear after it. Now the hair on its arms sometimes stands on end when it is asked when the bear will eventually be given a taste.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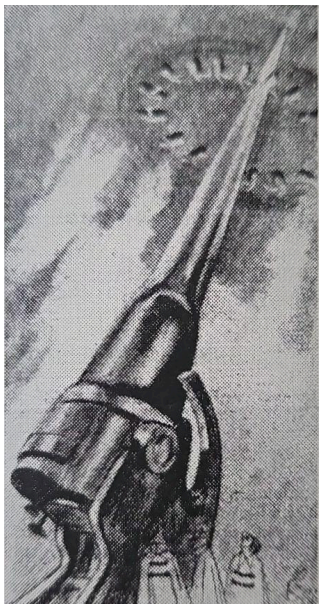
For the sake of the five-year plan, the Soviet government has taught the Russian people to worship the machine: the godless have put a new god on the altar.



(334)

The earth resounds with the pounding of the machine. But the "industrial construction" of the five-year plan essentially means only the creation of a formidable defense industry. On "Labor Day," a strange maypole goes up in Soviet Russia.

(335)

The chimneys are smoking. "Russia has the biggest factories," says the Dutch illustrator, as Stalin speaks, "the biggest factories for making bombers and poison gas."

Terror

"A dictatorship is unlimited and unlawful power based on violence in the most direct sense of the word."

- Lenin

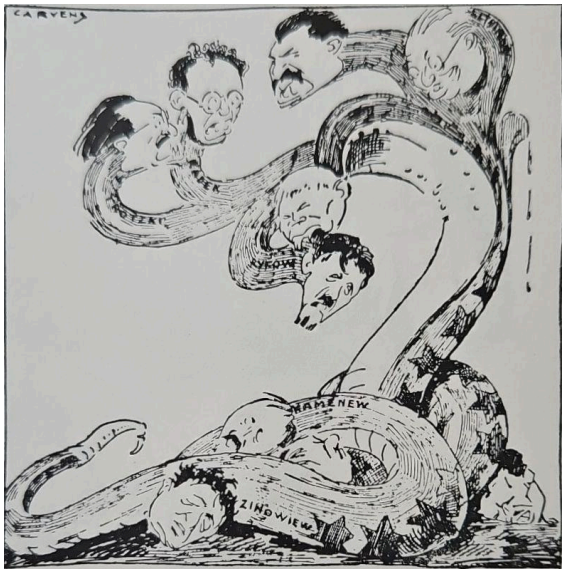
Bolshevism has proclaimed and carried out the "physical destruction" of all non-proletarian classes. Never in world history has death been so much the organ of government and the minister of state as in the Bolshevik dictatorship.

(336)

"That is our glorious ideal! That is our glorious ideal!"

(337)

During the French Revolution, it was said that revolution devours its own children. From a sea of blood and horror, Trotsky-Bronstein and his clique emerged. They have unforgettably shown the face of the ruling caste of the Soviet Union; now this sea spreads outwards.



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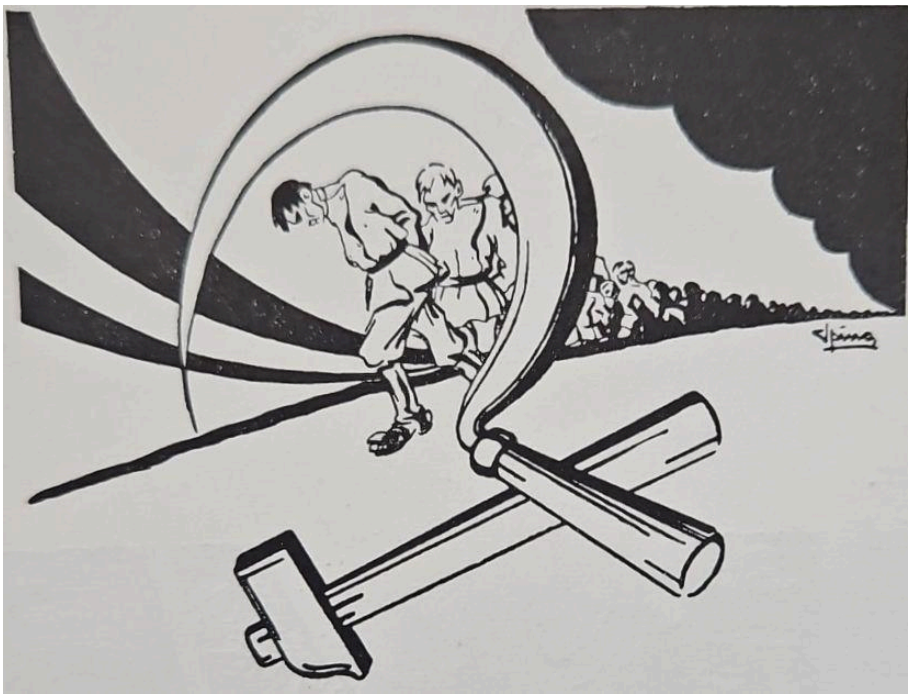
The hydra of Bolshevism now tears itself apart.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Stalin built himself a new "triumphal arch".

(341)

One of the most sinister aspects of the great show trials that led to the deaths of the "Trotskyists" was the self-incrimination of the defendants. It was said that the defendants confessed under the influence of a narcotic. An English cartoon imagined what it would be like if Stalin himself took this narcotic and the shadows from the darkness accuse him: "Yes, comrades, I am guilty, I have ruthlessly murdered you; I have brought about the Spanish crisis; I tried to involve Europe in wars."

(342)

In his political testament, Lenin warned against Stalin, saying that he was coarse and primitive. But Stalin triumphed over Lenin. Soon the last of Lenin's guard will have passed away. The red tsar will

have accomplished the work that the Italian caricature represents: to wipe out the tribe of Lenin's people. His coarse, primitive, uncouth force will have triumphed over the whitewashed Western Bolshevism.

The Soviet Union as Seen in its Own Caricatures

The Soviet caricature itself provides a vivid image of the enormous abuses of the Soviet state: the ineradicable, rampant damage of this regime is reflected in it vividly and clearly.

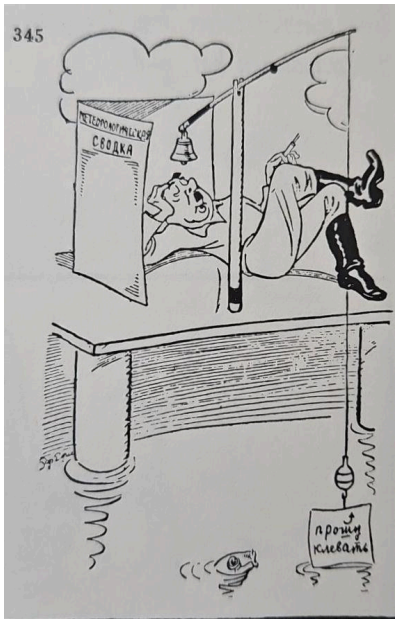
(343)

The Soviet caricature shows how the constant threat of the GPU, the terrorist secret police, hangs over the lives of Soviet citizens: the murderous hand of the GPU is clenched around the neck of a factory worker who is studying "treasonable plans". What other industry in the world needs such an "incentive"!

The great experiment of the communist economy has covered the whole of Russia with a sprawling network of bureaucracy that has eaten into the very fabric of Russian life. The Soviet press and Soviet caricature wage their fight against the plague. The evil is ineradicable; an oak tree would bear peaches sooner than the Soviet state will get rid of the inherited evil of bureaucracy.

(344)

The path to work leads through countless offices, main offices, trusts, government offices and counters: it is necessary to climb a mountain, so to speak, before any useful work can be done.



(345)

This is how a Soviet bureaucrat would fish, based on his own work performance.

(346)

There are, for example, "perks" for farmers who grow sugar beets. But the farmers know nothing about it. The cigarette smoke from a celebrating bureaucracy forms a veil over it - a veil that envelops everything in the Soviet Union.

(347)

If not the trees, then at least the chairs of bureaucracy have grown sky-high. Ladders are needed to help them find their way back down to the workers they are supposed to serve.

(348)

The only thing left is the chistka*, the constant cleaning of the apparatus, which testifies less to the vigilance of the state power than to the ineradicability of the damage.

*Russian word meaning "political purge".

(349)

The tuber keeps producing poisonous shoots. It takes effort and blood, yet nothing changes.

Given the limited scope for criticism in the Soviet Union, the Soviet caricature reveals a great deal. It reflects a country that is suffering from a terrible paralysis: a country that is sick to death.

Is the Soviet Union Returning to Europe?

The Soviet Union is now seizing power across the world. It has already brought its armies to the borders of Western Europe; it is preparing to conquer the whole world, both internally and externally. Moscow is the seat of an international organization that sees itself as the future world government.

(350)

Will Europe build its "Great Wall" against the new horde?

(351)

Curiously, some European states have reached out to this horde with open arms. France made a pact with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in response to the revival of Germany after the oppression of the Treaty of Versailles; Marianne is afraid of a dachshund and throws herself into the arms of a bear instead.

(352)

France, whose black regiments are increasingly becoming the essence of its defense system, is leading a threatening African invasion in its south; for now, however, it must remain in the backseat as the band plays the "Red and Black"; it is the ladies' turn to dance at the Quai d'Orsay*.

*The Quai d'Orsay is the location of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

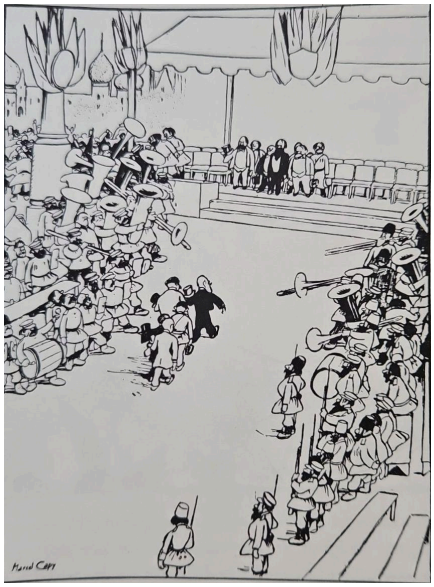
The alliances and agreements with the Soviet Union were announced as the “return of the Soviet Union to Europe”. It was recognized by the USA and admitted to the League of Nations. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics seemed to become respectable, as if the Soviet Union had hoisted the dress coat that its representatives wore in the international world as a flag of truce. Monarchs and relatives of the Czar shook hands with those who were responsible for the horrific assassination of the Czar's family; those who invited conspirators from all over the world to a rendezvous in Moscow, walked with gravitas at the coronation festivities and state ceremonies of the Western world. The world was lulled into the deceptive illusion that the Soviet Union had become “presentable”.

(353)

Tarzan of the jungle, who was now thought to be sufficiently afraid of the German and Japanese “savages”, was invited to join the League of Nations picnic party.

(354)

The bear knew how to flatter, which made Lloyd George, who, above all, had opened the "gates to Europe" to the Soviets, shine with joyful contentment as early as 1921.


(355)

The Soviet Union exercised diplomatic propriety - pictured here is when the French ambassador [Jean] Herbette was received in Moscow.

(356)

From the skyscrapers of America, the "blue eagle" (which was chosen as the emblem of Roosevelt's New Deal) lifted the Soviet Union's certificate of recognition, while [Maxim] Litvinov floats by as a friendly full moon.

(357)

They seemed to be becoming good friends: thanks to an economic agreement, the doors of the Soviet Union were opened to Hollywood. The English illustrator imagines what it might have been like when the first "cargo of culture for the barbarians" arrived in the Soviet Union.

(358)

The driving force behind the new feelings of friendship was, in the USA, as elsewhere, the hope of business; now they must host a most disreputable houseguest. The hostess (the American press) was admonished by the host (American capital): "Be nice to him, dear!"

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Mr. Litvinov continued to float through world diplomacy in his dual role of "Excellency" and "Comrade".

The Soviet Union and its “Friends”

Lenin left his successors a compendium of communist foreign policy. In comparison, Machiavelli's teaching of breaking promises for reasons of state is the Song of Songs of loyalty. There is eternal war between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world; all talk of peace is an illusion. Therefore, one is always dealing with enemies, and every breach of promise and every betrayal is permitted. One breaks treaties, depending on what the advantage of the communist power demands. The illusion of the “friendship” of the Soviet Union can also be seen by looking at the image that the Soviet caricature draws of those who are courted today.

No one can doubt that this wild, elemental hatred is its true face, and that its “friendship” is only a mask.

(360)

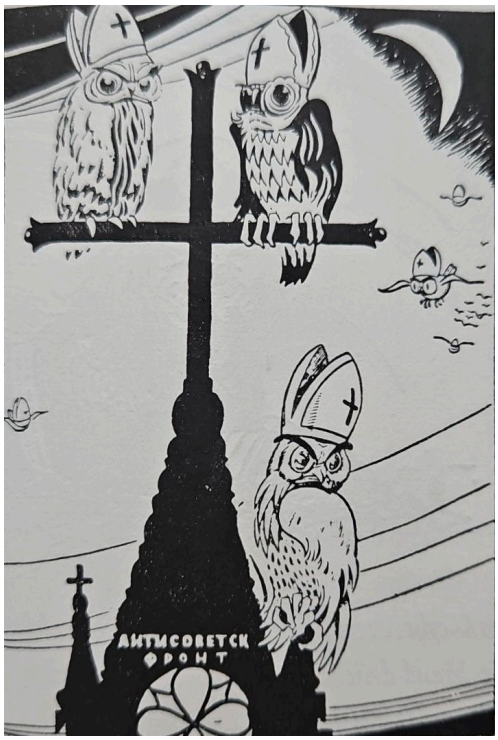
Christian Europe speaks of peace and friendship with the Soviet Union. The Soviet caricature pours buckets of dirt over Christianity and the Church. It draws with poison: hatred drips from its mouth like slime. It is brutal to the point of obscenity.

According to the Soviet caricature, the churches are only tools in the struggle of world capitalism against the Soviet Union.

The Pope is engulfed by a torrent of hatred; he is said to have led the capitalists in the war against the Soviet Union.

(361)

The cross is nothing more in Europe, says this crude, brutal caricature, than an emblem of war. It is hoisted in counterfeit bills and rubles; paraffin is dripping from it.



(362)

The Anglican Church is the butt of caustic ridicule. Its dignitaries are like nocturnal owls that perch on the steeple of the Anti-Soviet Front.

(363)

The Archbishop of Canterbury droned on forever about the persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union, as this Soviet caricature seems to express.

“The two Governments are confident that, conscious as they are that the integrity and prosperity of each is in the interest of the other, the two countries will conduct their mutual relations in that spirit of cooperation and good faith in the fulfillment of obligations assumed which is proper to their joint membership of the League of Nations.”

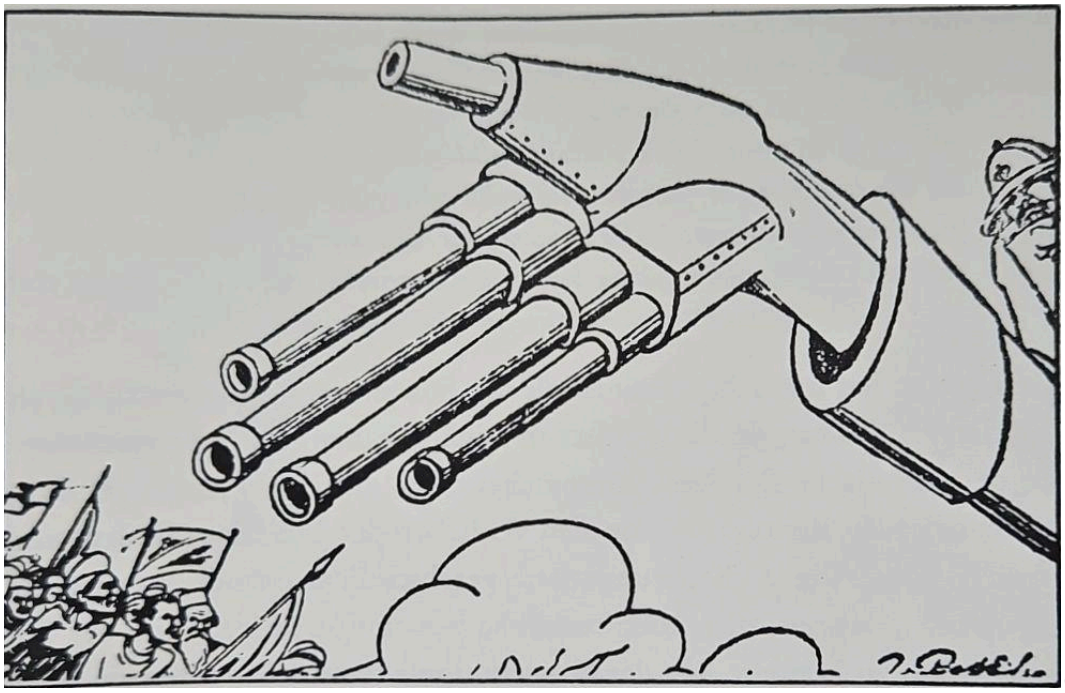
- Communiqué of March 31, 1935, regarding the Moscow talks by Lord Privy

In diplomatic parlance, Great Britain and the Soviet Union are considered friendly nations and declare to each other that the welfare of one corresponds to the interest of the other. The Communist International has taken care of this “welfare” of the British Empire in a strange way. It has incited the peoples everywhere against the British Empire, and the Soviet caricature has helped it in this. What is its face, and what is the mask? Are these really professions of friendship, or the wild, raging outbursts of enmity? The caricature provides the answer; it betrays the hatred that reaches too far into the very essence of the British Empire to ever fade away.

(364)(365)

In one Soviet caricature, John Bull has the face of a criminal, pushing a revolver into the hand of his Polish puppet, who is aiming at the Soviet Union. In another caricature, after the incidents in Hankau*, the British Empire is portrayed as a bloodthirsty beast.

*Hankou, now part of the city of Wuhan in modern China, was a town containing international zones belonging to France, Russia, Japan and Britain. In 1927, the British Concession Zone was occupied due to revolutionary fervor, and a month later the Chen-O'Malley Agreement was made to create a joint British-Chinese administration there. In 1929 the British Concession ended.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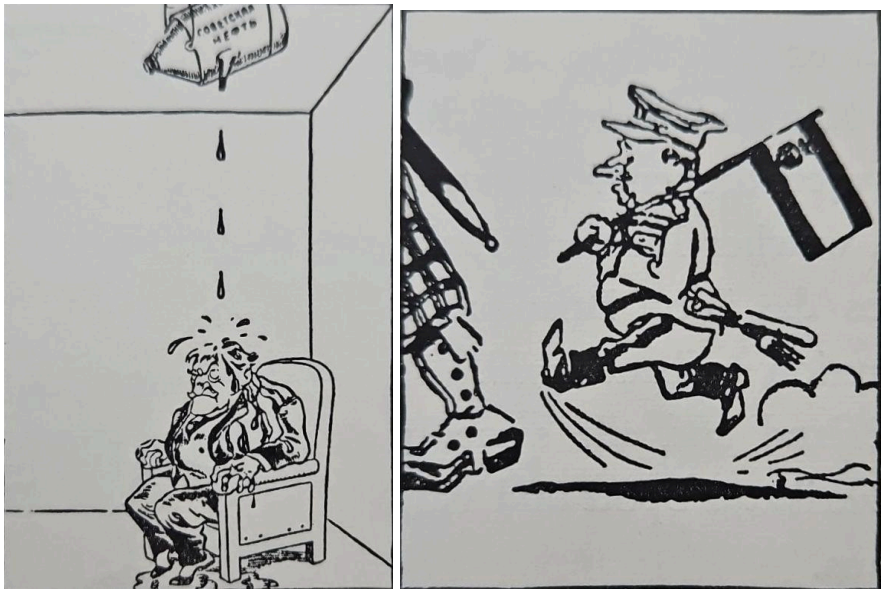
If the English labor government seeks a compromise with India, this "hand extended to India" will be mocked.

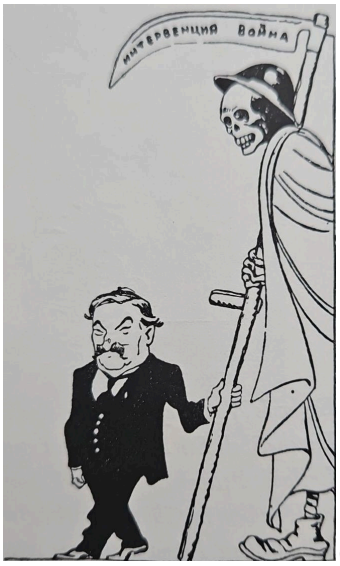

(367)(368)

England's economists are insulted: the head of the British-Dutch petroleum company Royal Dutch-Shell, Sir Henry Deterding, is depicted as suffering from leaking Russian petroleum. England's friends are defamed as lackeys; when Spain, in agreement with England, wanted to send a warship to China during unrest there, the Soviet caricature sneered: "I, too," it makes Primo de Rivera say, "am a great nation."

“Fortunately, a great nation is involved in the current discussion about the pacts: Russia. Thirteen years ago, in 1922, I went to Russia to see what was happening there. While we were making grandiose speeches and writing grandiose phrases, I was of the opinion that in Russia perhaps a great nation was making its revolution as we had made ours. I wanted to educate myself and so I took my pilgrim's staff and said to myself: I am the steadfast son of 1793. I want to see if these people have suffered under tsarism and are now trying to build a new order.”

- **Edouard Herriot, leader of the French Radical Socialist Party, on March 24th, 1935**

France has courted the most illusions around its alliance with the Soviet Union. Leaders of the French left have discovered a great democratic brother nation in the Soviet Union; the faithful followers of the great French Revolution, who see themselves as heirs to the Jacobins and regard the year 1793 as France's greatest, most wonderful moment in its history, imagined that they could bring about the great Russian revolution alongside the French one. Together with the Soviet Union, they wanted to establish a European collective system. In this, Aristide Briand remained the idol of these people; he made the “Organization of Peace” the great foreign policy ideal of France, which those leaders of the Left have elevated to their religion. One only has to see the image of this Briand in the Soviet caricature to know what an illusion France has fallen prey to when it wants to build the Briand ideal on the pillars of the Soviet Union. The Soviet caricature pours ridicule and contempt, hatred and scorn, over Briand and all his ideals.



(369)

When Briand spoke about pan-European economic plans at the International Agrarian Conference, the Soviet caricature said that the “agrarian politician Briand” had presented a peculiar May Day, namely the interventionist war, at the conference.

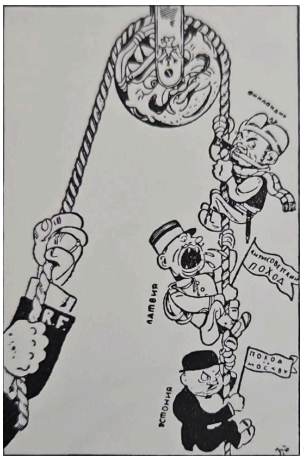
(370)

The mockery became brutally crude when, alluding to Briand's failed plans, the "family of Mr. Briand" was paraded.

(371)

His plan for a "United States of Europe" was ridiculed. He was depicted promoting it as his own image in the form of the Statue of Liberty; the torch emanated fire that wished to strike against the Soviet Union.

Today, the incense sprinkled on the national independence of the Baltic states and the states of the Little Entente is an integral part of the Soviet Union's foreign policy propaganda. In the past, the true feelings of the Soviet Union about their “dear friends” were revealed in their caricature.


(372)

“The independence of the Baltic states is one of the most valuable guarantees of peace,” says Litvinov. In the Soviet caricature, however, the Baltic states appear as a criminal gang that is being led by France.

(373)

“The Soviet Union has recognized the danger that the policy of subversion in Europe represents and has moved closer to those who want to maintain peace at all costs, despite all difficulties,” says [Edvard] Beneš.
When generals who have been defamed in the Soviet Union as counter-revolutionaries are received in Prague, the military of Czechoslovakia, which today is one of their “dear friends”, appears in the contemptible guise of hungry birds to whom the “fascist general” [Radola] Gayda* throws grains.

*Gayda was a Czech military commander who, from 1926 to 1928, was accused of conspiracy against the Czech government and planning to overthrow it via a fascist coup (he was involved with founding the “National Fascist Community” in 1926). Gayda was forced to retire from the military as a result of this.

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"The resumption of relations with the Soviet Union has put an end to a situation that has lasted 15 years," says [Nicolae] Titulescu*.
But the Soviet Union's true opinion of him is clear from a Soviet cartoon illustrating a news item: Titulescu interviews Mussolini.

*Nicolae Titulescu was the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and during his tenure, he believed that Romania needed an alliance with the Soviet Union to deter Germany, which failed due to lack of support from King Carol II and other politicians.

One of the Comintern's recipes was to pose as defenders of "parliamentary freedoms." But at heart, they have unspeakable contempt for the champions of civil liberties; they hate the "fascist" opponent; they despise the "bourgeois" ally.

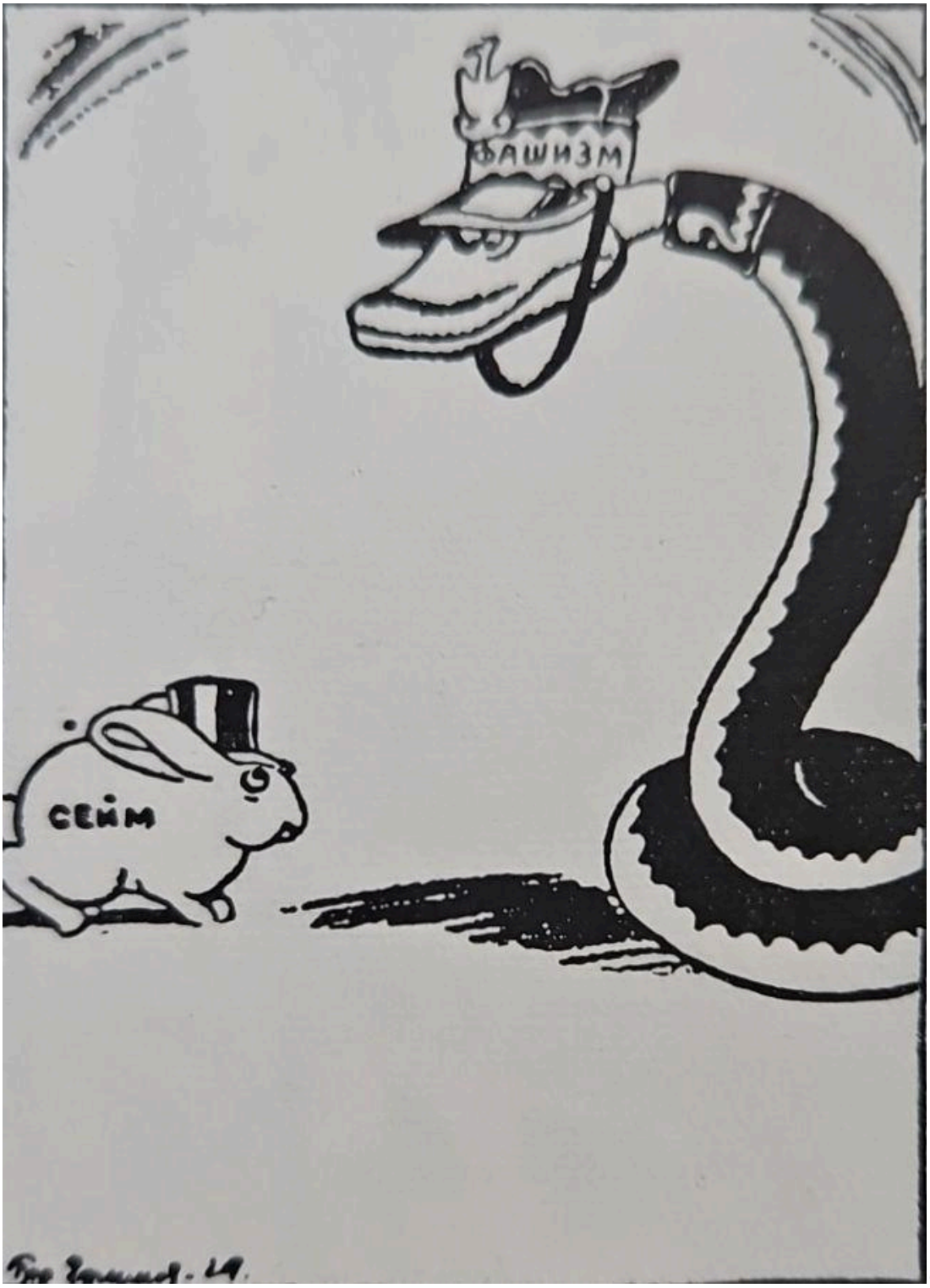
(375)

Could contempt be deeper than that for the Polish Sejm*, which one pretended to defend in Poland against the fascist dictatorship? Pilsudski plays as a Polish fortune teller, by pulling the hair out of the Sejm, an ancient game: Should I dissolve, should I not dissolve?

*The Sejm is part of Poland's parliament to this day, and was seen at the time as Poland's national symbol of a desire to be a parliamentary republic.

(376)

The Polish parliamentarian worships the military boot: this is how Bolshevism depicts those it wants to incite to fight as "freedom fighters".



(377)

Like a miserable, contemptible rabbit, the dignified importance of the parliamentary regime scurries before the fascist snake.

The Soviet Union in Transition

Is this the return of the Soviet Union to Europe, or is it not rather the invasion of Bolshevism, which is being glorified as the return of the prodigal son? Has not Europe howled with joy as she dragged the Trojan horse within her walls, and are not the spirits of anarchy and revolution now emerging from the belly of the horse?

(378)

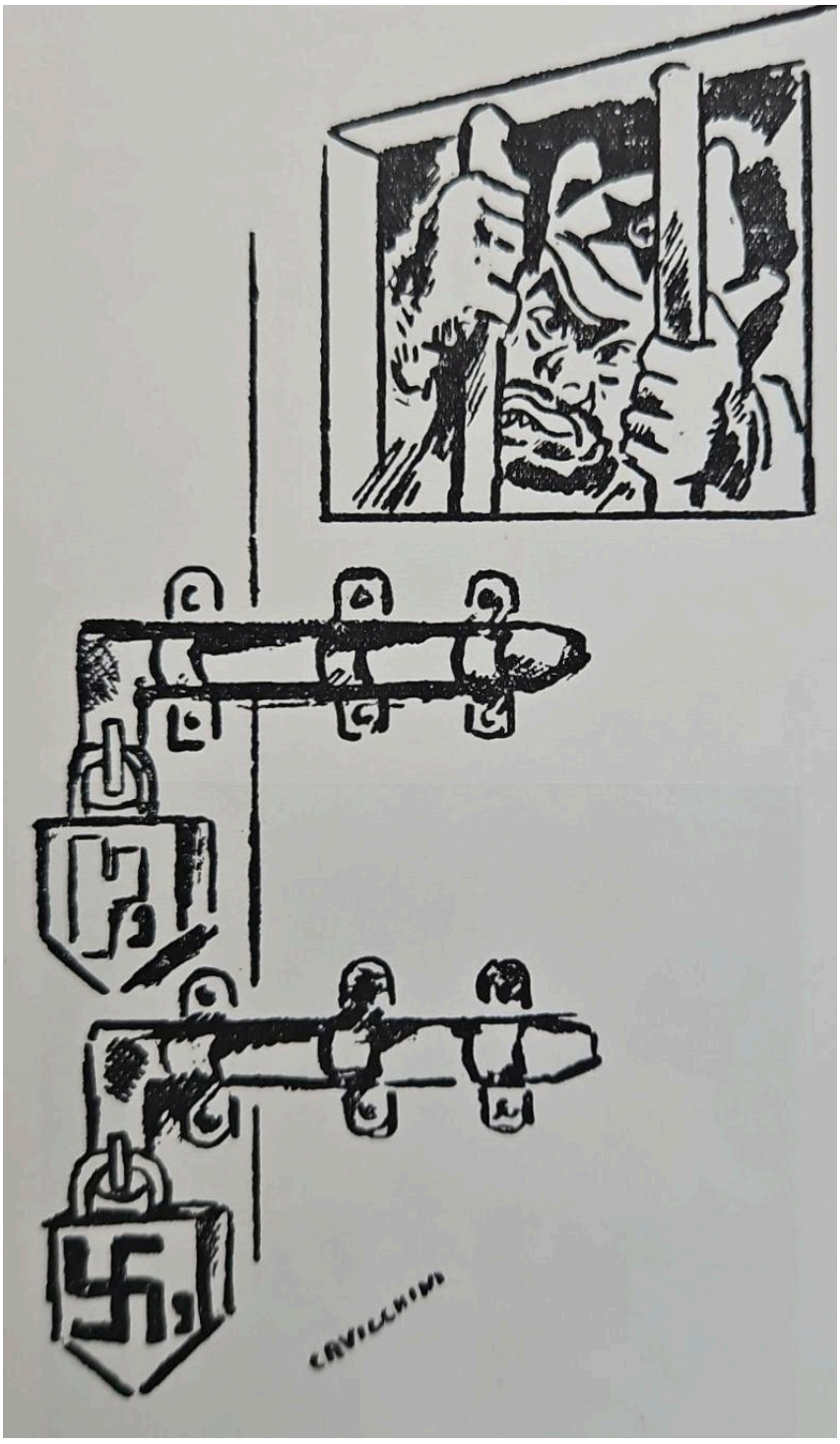
The "great maneuvers" are beginning, says the French caricature. For the France of Léon Blum, the command is "rifles ready!"

(379)

While this same France is being pushed against the last bulwark of Europe,

(380)

a dance of death is being played in Spain, and a Spanish-Russian ballet is putting on a benefit performance.



(381)

"We are convinced that sooner or later, despite all efforts at civil understanding and all political wisdom, no nation will be spared a final and clear decision, because it is not Europe that has been torn in two, and not by us, but Bolshevism that has attacked and thus called into question the foundations of our entire humane state and social order, our cultural concept, our religious beliefs, our moral views."

- **Adolf Hitler at the Nuremberg Party Rally on September 14th, 1936**

2. The Spanish Civil War

“We are determined to rescue Spain from the hands of its enemies.”
- General Franco

The Spanish Civil War

"The movement that has now been launched against the Spanish government is the result of Spaniards whose hearts are filled with sacred love for their homeland turning against the enemies of their homeland at home and abroad. These enemies have established a regime of anarchy in Spain through the use of violence, assassination, and the indiscriminate use of weapons. Now, for peace and justice, Spain has risen up in every corner of the country. The armed forces are prepared to protect the homeland against all enemies. Our movement is subversive in that we will attempt for the first time to establish a regime of true liberty, equality and fraternity for all Spaniards."

- **Address by General Franco at the National Rally on July 22nd, 1936**

Once a world power, then crushed by its own greatness, Spain has carried a heavy legacy through the ages. A national upheaval and a deep, genuine reform were long overdue. Instead, the Spanish state went the old, well-trodden path of parliamentary democracy, unable to solve even one of the essential questions of Spanish life. As the social crisis intensified, the reins of the state began to slip. Power swung back and forth around the center, sometimes tipping a bit more to the right, sometimes a bit more to the left. In October 1934, Spain experienced its first civil war. At that time, the Popular Front succumbed without being truly defeated. In February 1936, it was able to "win" in elections that were held in anarchy and could only produce anarchy. Now social anarchy was raging over Spain. The government drifted like a piece of wood on the waves and thought it was on top. Waves of strikes engulfed the country; churches went up in flames; political assassination stalked the streets. When the Conservative Party leader, [José Calvo] Sotelo, was assassinated in broad daylight and it became evident that the leaders of National Spain were fair game, National Spain rose up, along with the army under the generalship of Francisco Franco. The great struggle for the regeneration of Spain had begun.

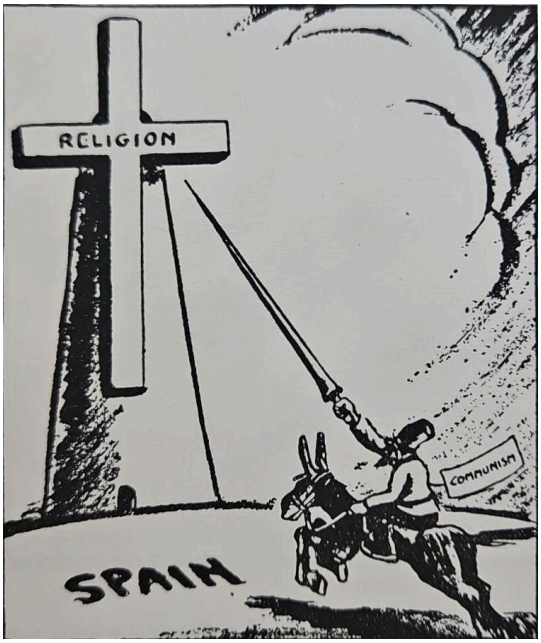
(382)

Spain was, as it were, tied to the back of a bull chased by the furies of anarchy.

The Spanish Republic wanted to be the home of the people who no longer wanted anything. A powerful, decisive will from above was lacking, and the command for Spain came more and more from the dark depths. Spain was about to become a field of anarchy.

(383)

Spain tried to climb into Russia's boots.



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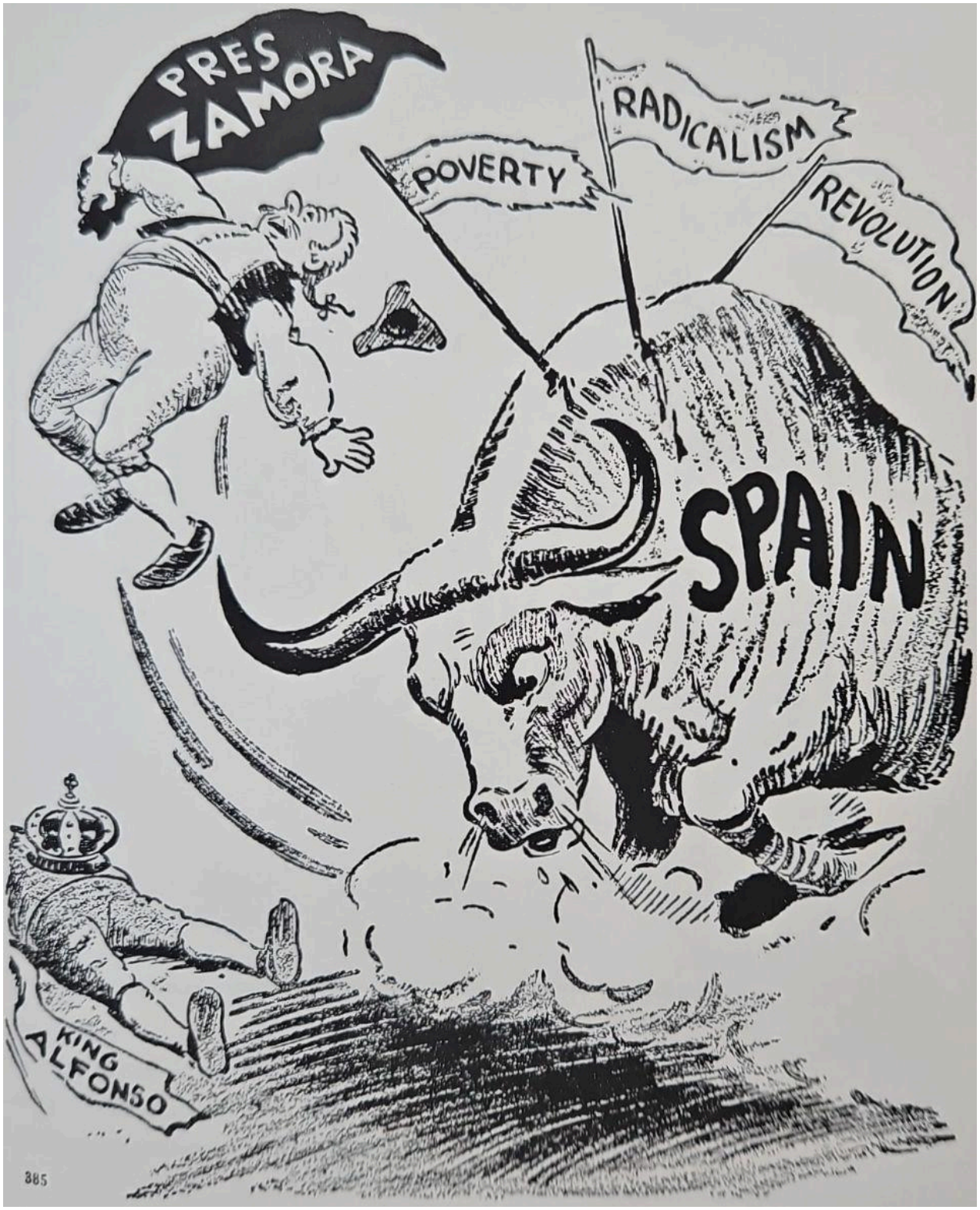
In the holy land of Spain, the godlessness of communism spread.



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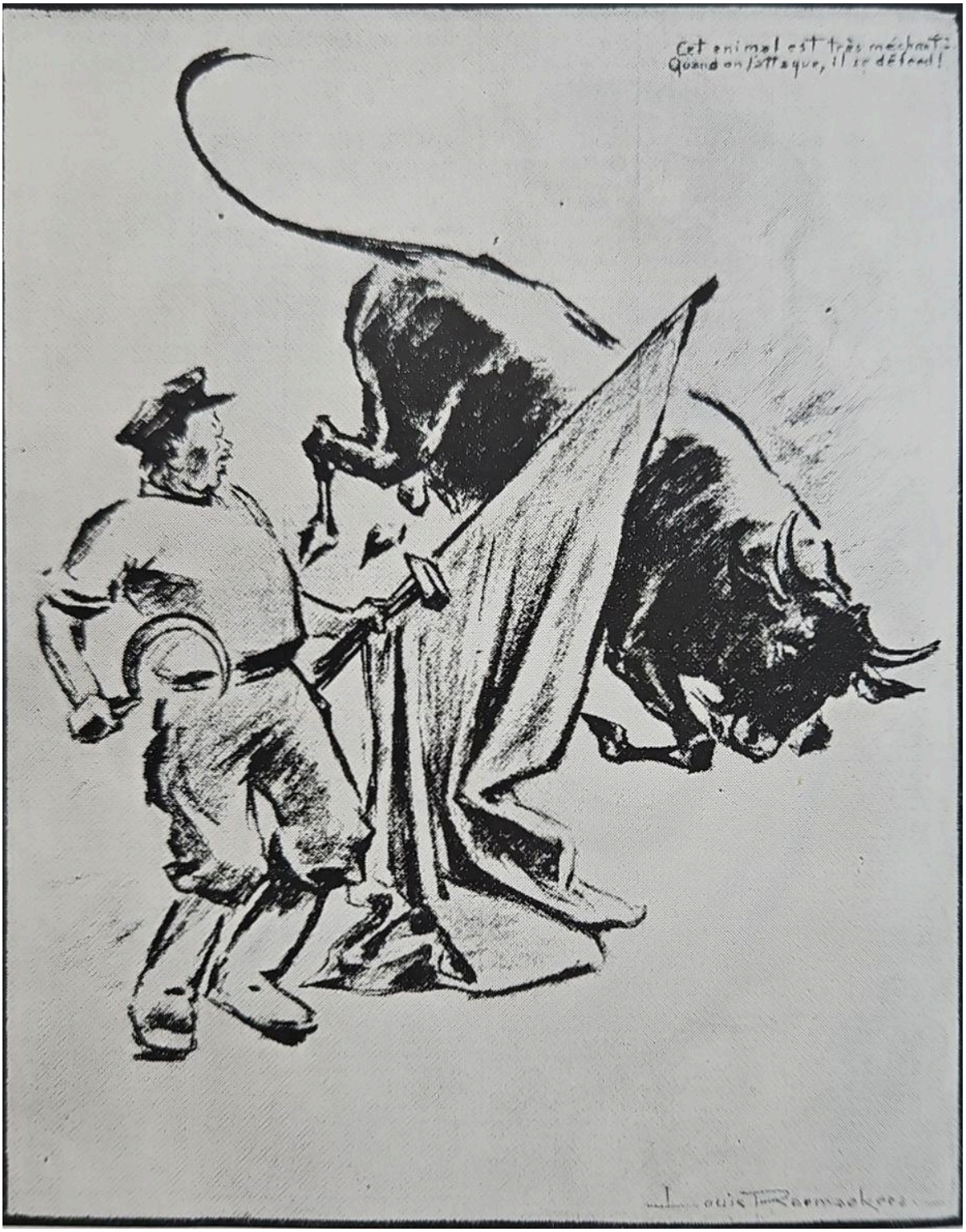
The poor, incited by revolution and radicalism, played catch with their so-called rulers.



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The communist torero (it was natural that in the classical land of bullfighting, the caricaturist had an obvious preference), already thought the Spanish bull would collapse when, after the cowardly assassination attempt on Sotelo, he rose again and leaped at his tormentors with great force.

But now all the forces of horror were unleashed. A ghastly dance of death swept across Spain as communist and anarchist bands seized control. Thousands upon thousands were slaughtered with unspeakable cruelty; a large part of the priesthood was massacred; churches and monasteries went up in flames; the magnificent creations of Spain's ancient culture were the target of a diabolical destructive rage; all hell seemed to have been let loose.

(387)

In the fall of 1936, Spain had suffered a terrible harvest under the Bolshevik sickle.

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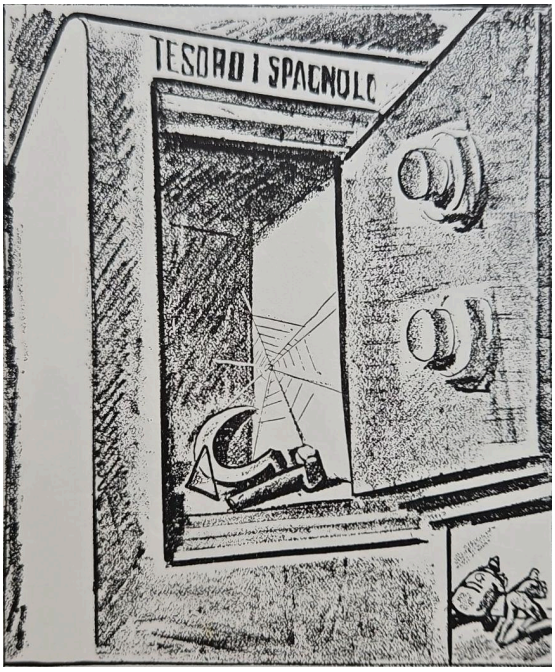
From Catalonia, the Bolshevik monster looked down on the Mediterranean. Faced with the threat of a Bolshevik Catalonia, Italy immediately gave the solemn assurance that it could not tolerate this danger to the peace of the Mediterranean.

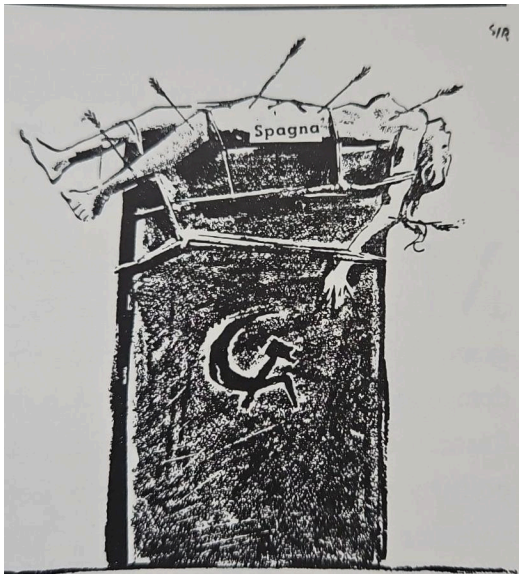
(389)

Spain danced to the diabolical tune set by the unleashed mob, arms in hand; Death has learned new moves from the Russians.



(390)

Spain's national wealth migrated across the border: a peculiar receipt for it lay in the Republic's safes.



(391)

The Communist International has erected a gruesome altar of sacrifice.

(392)

A Dutch drawing shows what the Soviet Union wants to make of the Iberian Peninsula.

Non-Intervention

"Those who disturb the unity or the peace of other nations with alien ideologies; those who incite people to deadly hatred; those who provoke unrest and turn one class into the enemy of all others, are the ones who stir up war. Events teach us that internal war is increasingly becoming a means of international war."

- Portuguese Foreign Minister [Armindo] Monteiro before the League of Nations on September 30th, 1936

From the moment the Soviet Union entered into its unholy alliance with Madrid, the Spanish Civil War became an international struggle. But in Western Europe, people surrendered with voluptuous pain to the nightmare of "fascist" (i.e. Italian and German) influence in Spain. In many cases, people thought along the lines of old-fashioned cabinet politics; while the terrible drama of the struggle between order and anarchy was unfolding on Spanish soil, they played the game of small gains.

(393)

If one were blind, one might think that the powers were fighting each other in Spain with the grave crosses of the civil war.

(394)

Spain seemed to be nothing more than a supply line. As the story went that the lack of interpreters was slowing down the battle in Spain, the cartoon depicted the soldiers of the European powers fighting each other in a confused mess (as if there was not a clear, straight front running through the Spanish war). The British Foreign Secretary [Anthony] Eden joined the fight with the machine-gun fire of his notes, while the Spaniard asked the Non-Intervention Committee: "Excuse me, sir, is this a private quarrel or can anyone join in?"

(395)

When the powers committed themselves to non-intervention, the flow of war supplies to red Spain did not stop: this image by an American cartoonist, "Hands across the border!" remained the same.

The solution of the Spanish crisis as a European conflict was sought by means of non-intervention decrees. This non-intervention was often a pure farce. The German and Italian governments, moreover, repeatedly pointed out that non-intervention must remain a vacuum unless an end were put to the influence of foreign elements in Spain. If we want to prevent Spain from becoming an international hotbed of conflict, we should first of all eliminate the pernicious international influences that, by pitting classes against each other within nations, automatically drive nations against each other. Wherever the flag of world revolution flies, war has been signaled.

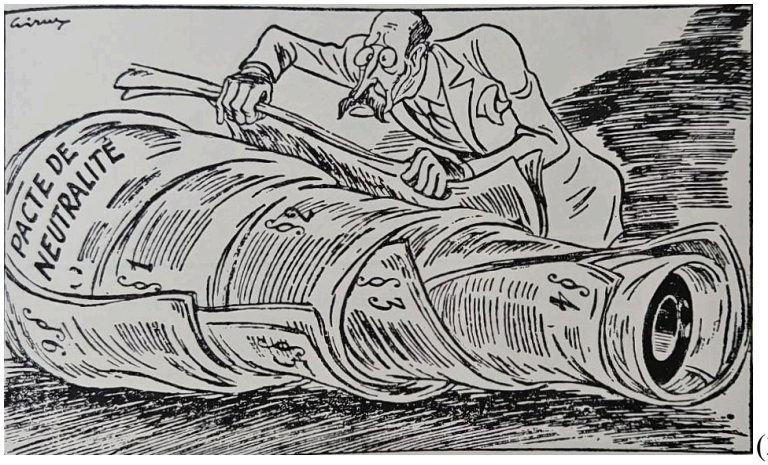
When there was talk of non-intervention so that the Spanish war would not turn into a European one, Germany and Italy asked:

(396)

Does that mean the removal of all foreign elements from Spain - a Spain for the Spaniards?

(397)

Or, does it hinder the war delivery to Spain, as little as scarecrows stop airplanes?



(398)

Will the contracts for non-interference be wrapped around foreign aid and materials?

(399)

Here, often enough is what "non-interference" of the great democracies looked like.

3. The National Crisis in France

“Renew or break.”
- André Tardieu

Renouncement of High Politics

“In France, the government is now just a word, and its actions just a gesture.”
- Paul Doumergue on October 4th, 1934

France is perhaps the classic country of political caricature and political satire. For more than a century, the ideologues in France have fought each other and learned to sharpen their weapons.
There is more than enough material for caricature. France once felt like the world's Messiah; Victor Hugo spoke of its “holy bayonets”; the France of the Great Revolution was the new intellectual center of the world, capable and called upon to take over the heritage of the Roman Church.
But today no one in France doubts that France has lost its flavor. The glorious Republic appears somewhat disabled. The chest is still decorated with medals, but the parade is done with an umbrella. The French state, still bathed in glorious memories, seems to have grown tired, even to have gone to sleep at times. Since the end of the 19th century, there has been talk of secret powers ruling in France. The French state boasted that it had “extinguished the lights in the sky”; but a new church, Freemasonry, had set itself up as the shepherd of souls and provided the confessors for the greats of the Republic. The powers of finance have not infrequently guided the rulers of France on the right path with mild or emphatic encouragement. Since the beginning of the 20th century, those in power in France have begun to act like puppets.
France has turned away from “big politics”. The glory of great national efforts has become too expensive for it. But France has also assumed a far-reaching role in Europe after the Treaty of Versailles. There are increasing signs that this role is beyond France's strength. In any case, France must either learn to be modest in her foreign policy as well as in her domestic policy, or seek and find a domestic policy on a large scale, which alone can carry such an ambitious role in the world.

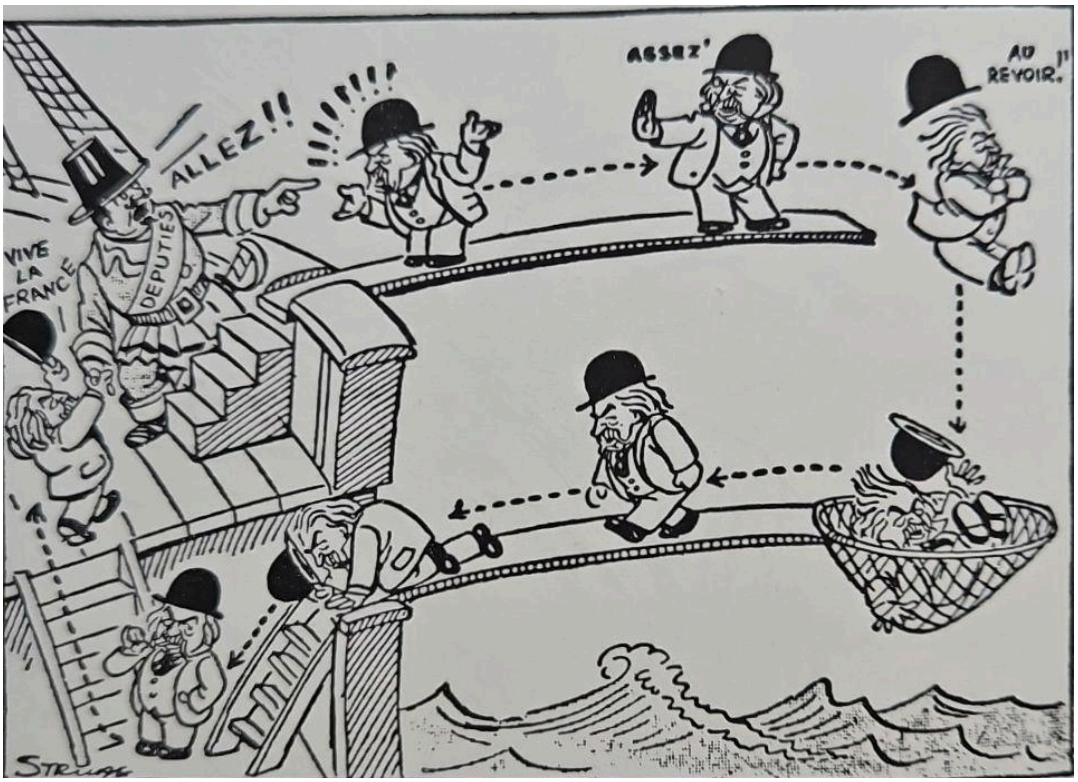
(400)

If caricature wanted to give an overall picture of French politics, it stuck to the unholy alliance of politics and finance: the blind leading the lame through stagnant swamps.

The Prime Ministers' Cartel

“The cartel of prime ministers are primarily concerned with securing a regular and easy position, in the classic parliamentary rotation through indulgent inactivity and resigned lack of conviction.”
- [Pierre-Étienne] Flandin on January 12th, 1935

Ministries in France are short-lived, but the ministers have a long life. The rotation is the peculiar movement of French politics; the ministers will always come back, even if they have perhaps moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of War in the meantime. There are politicians who have, at this point, held all possible ministries; this means that French politics is always bubbling and seething, because the cabinets are fragile and only have a confusing conglomeration of individual groups behind them in parliament. The cards therefore always have to be reshuffled, but the same cards are always played. Nowhere is there so much movement, and nowhere does so little happen: “Plus ça change, plus ça reste la même chose” (The more it changes, the more it stays the same).



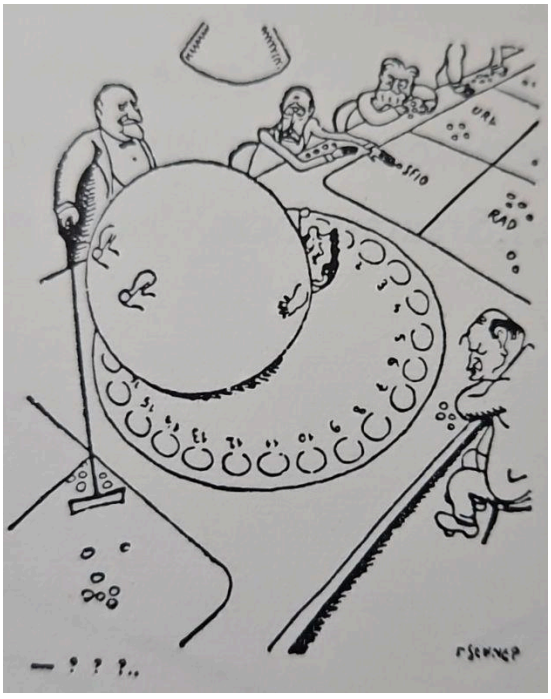
(401)

Briand has to go overboard.

But the key to forming cabinets was usually held by the Radical Socialist Party; it formed and destroyed the cabinets. It ruled sometimes with the left, sometimes with the right.

(402)

Your rotund guide Herriot paddles with the double rudder: Léon Blum, the Socialist leader, and [Louis] Marin, the leader of the right.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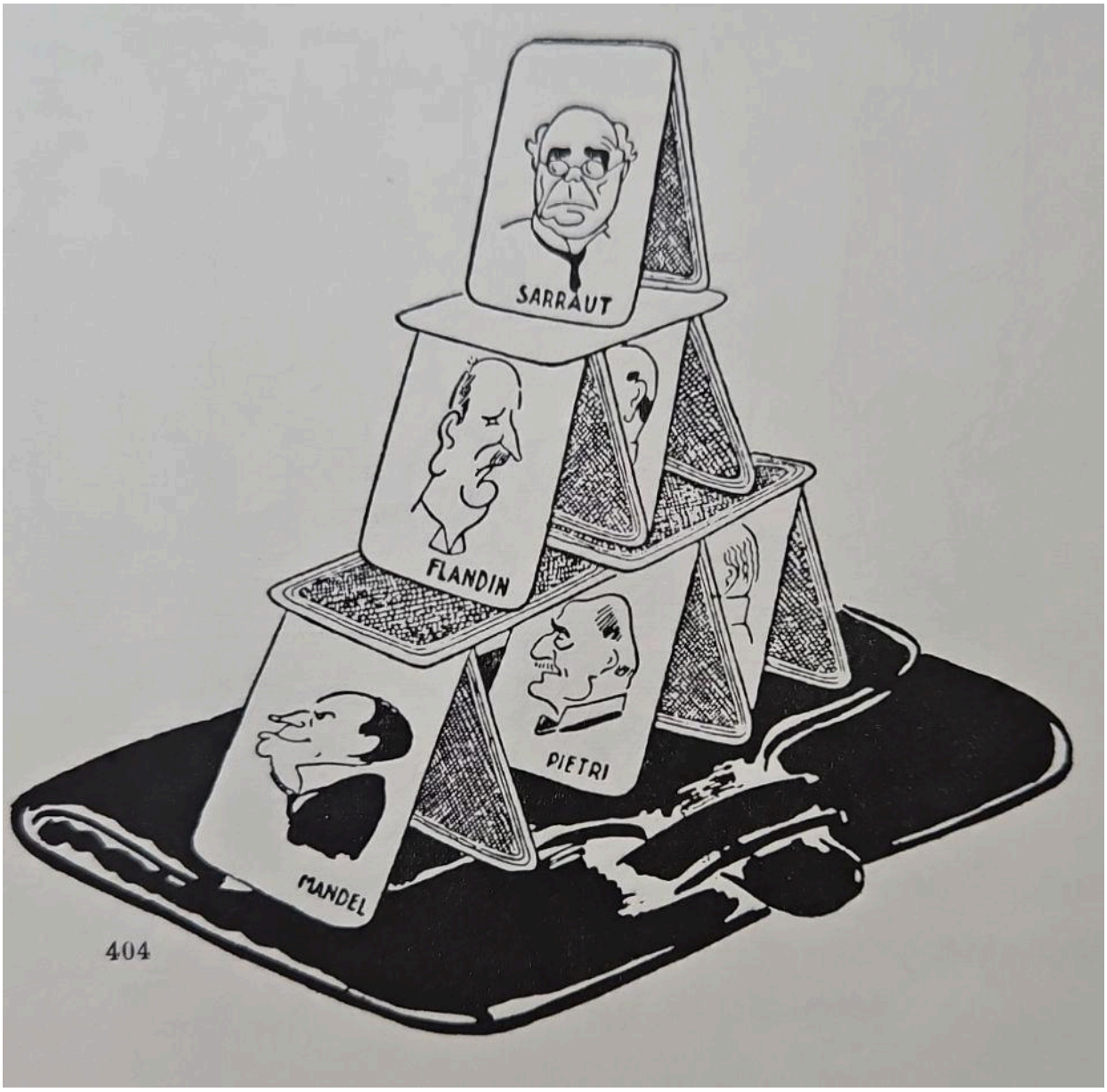
He is also the "lucky dice" of French politics; when it tilts to the left, the Socialists are in government and call the shots; when it falls to the right, it is the Right's good fortune.

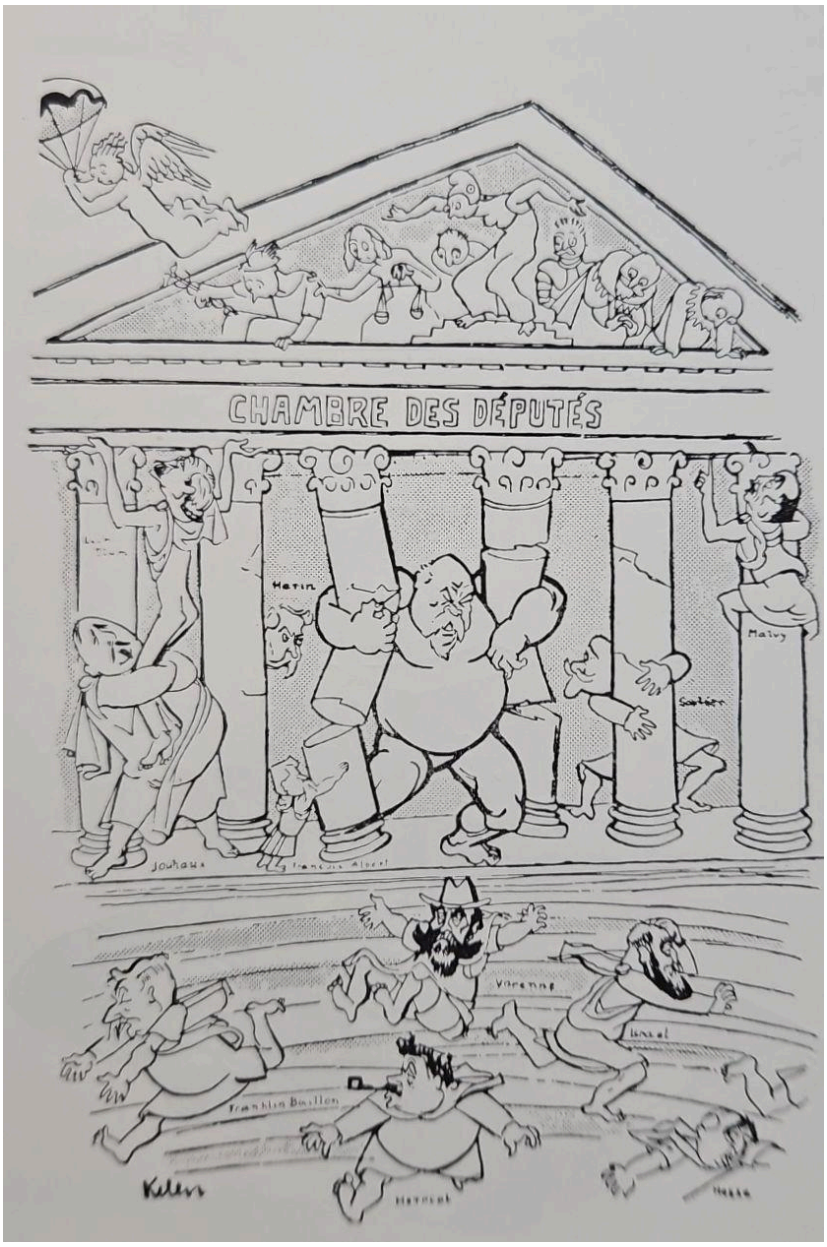


(404)

When the Sarraut ministry was formed as the hundredth ministry of the French Republic, it looked like a house of cards, like countless ministries before it.

Affairs

In 1933, France seemed to be gripped by a serious crisis. Major financial and political scandals came to light; a deep agitation swept through France. The political leagues seemed to be carried by the wave of public outrage against political corruption. “State reform” echoed everywhere - even the statesmen heard it.



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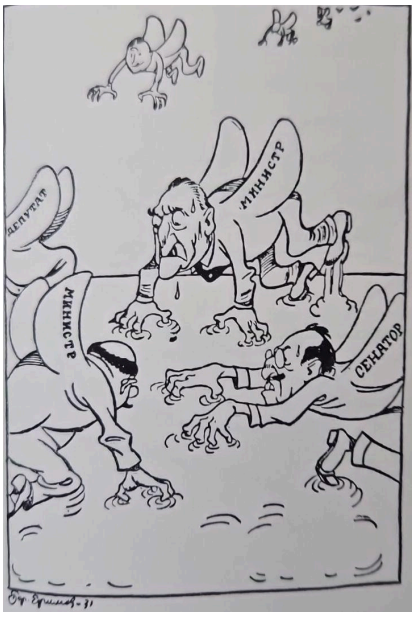
Upright old campaigners in French parliamentary politics were suddenly seized by a holy zeal for reform. The stout, portly Chéron seemed like a new Samson, tearing down the pillars of parliament. A wild flight of the parliamentary greats began, and even the statues in the gable of the French parliament building no longer found it quite so safe.



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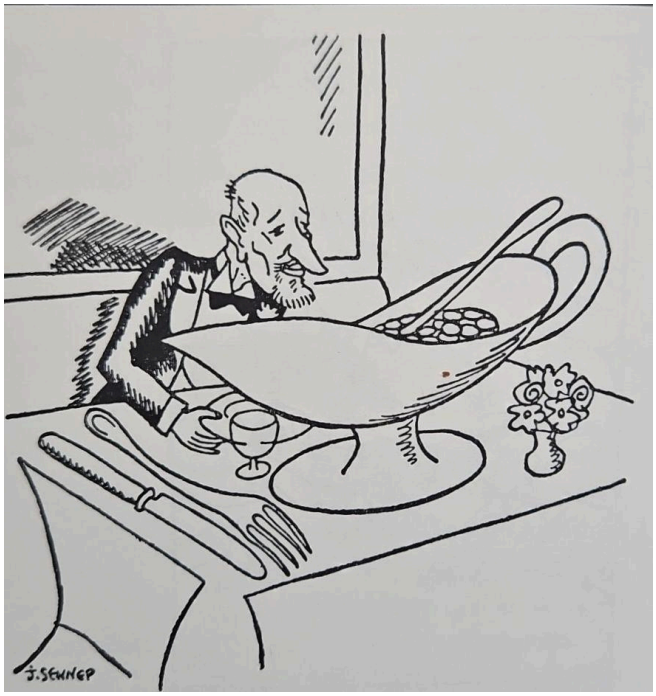
When the great Stavisky Affair*, i.e. the enormous fraud of a Jewish speculator, came to light, an enormous swamp of political corruption opened up.
Ministers, MPs and senators seemed to have become embroiled in the financial scandal.

*The Stavisky Affair erupted in 1934 after it was found that a French-Jewish embezzler and financier, Alexandre Stavisky, was being protected by Prime Minister Camille Chautemps, who represented the Radical-Socialist government. The scandal led to mass protests and anti-government demonstrations by the Right, which led to the death of 17 demonstrators shot by the Paris police.

(407)

Some didn't come out of it alive and lost their jobs and dignity. The clothes dealers had plenty to do; many state wardrobes were for sale.



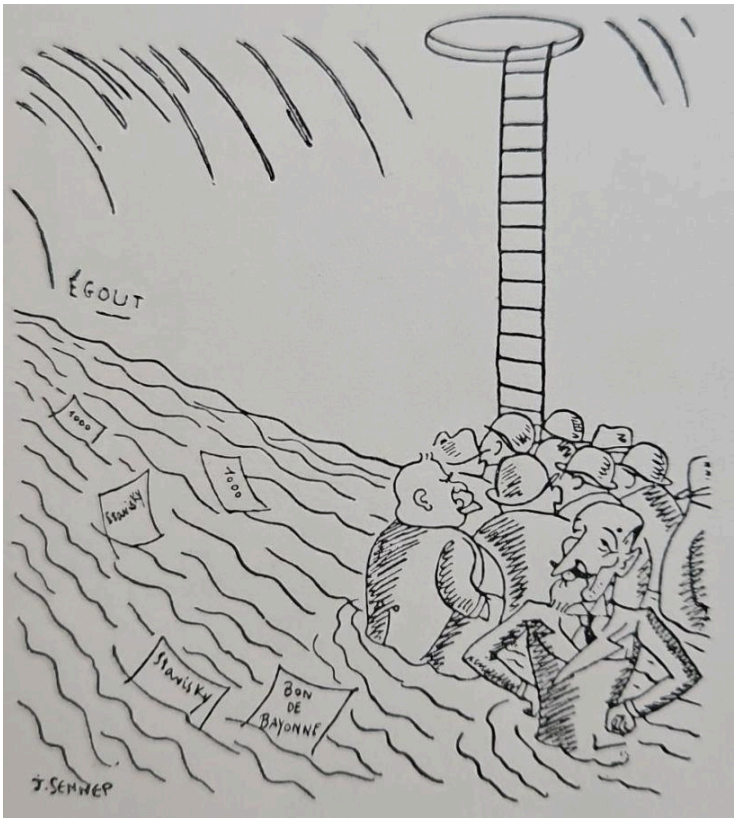
(408)

The affair began with the falsification of Creditanstalt* shares in Bayonne; its first victim was the Minister for the Colonies, [Albert François Marie] Dalimier**. He "turned the bayonet sour".***

*Creditanstalt was a major Austrian bank led by the Rothschilds family; its bank collapse in 1931 heralded the Great Depression.

**Dalimier was accused of fraud and of assisting Stavisky by endorsing him. He was forced to resign in 1934 in the wake of the Affair.

***This is a pun on the French sauce "Béarnaise", and makes more sense in German - "Bayonnaise sauer geworden".



(409)

It was not limited to Dalimier however; a sizable community had gathered in the sewer.

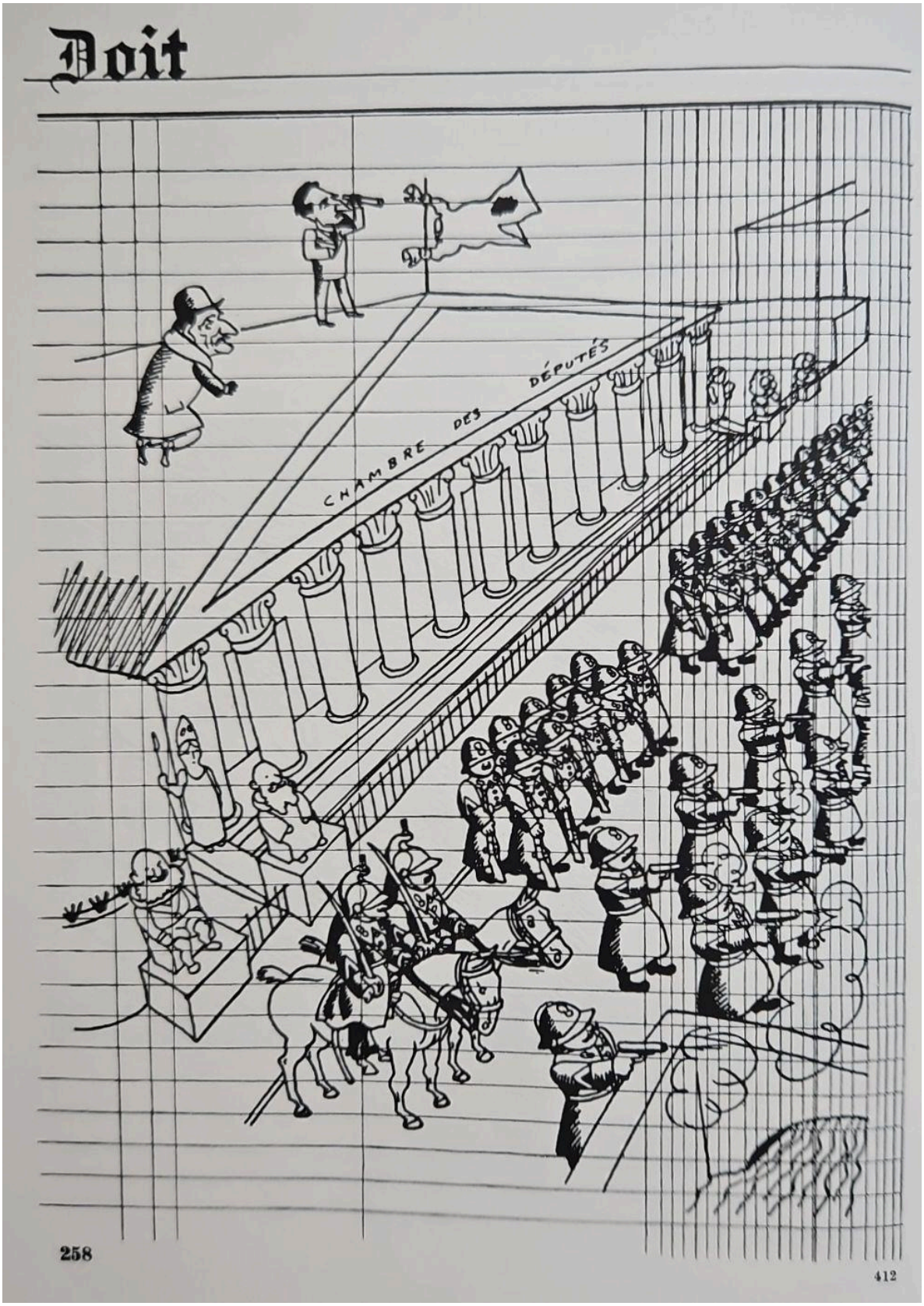
(410)

And the swamp seemed to be getting deeper: 'Je suis partout' – "and the mud is still rising."

The investigation of the “case” was by no means rushed. The word 'cover-up' passed from mouth to mouth. Discontent grew, built up, and no one could see when it would break over the dams with full force. Parliament sessions were increasingly held under heavy security; the access roads to Parliament were cordoned off. Prime Minister Chautemps had promised 'clarity' in the Stavisky affair; now there was light.

(411)

On February 6th, 1934, the fuse finally ignited. The Frontists demonstrated in front of Parliament to protest the delays in the investigation; Parliament was heavily guarded, and eventually bloody clashes broke out, resulting in numerous deaths. Thus, a strange page was added to the ledger of the French Republic.



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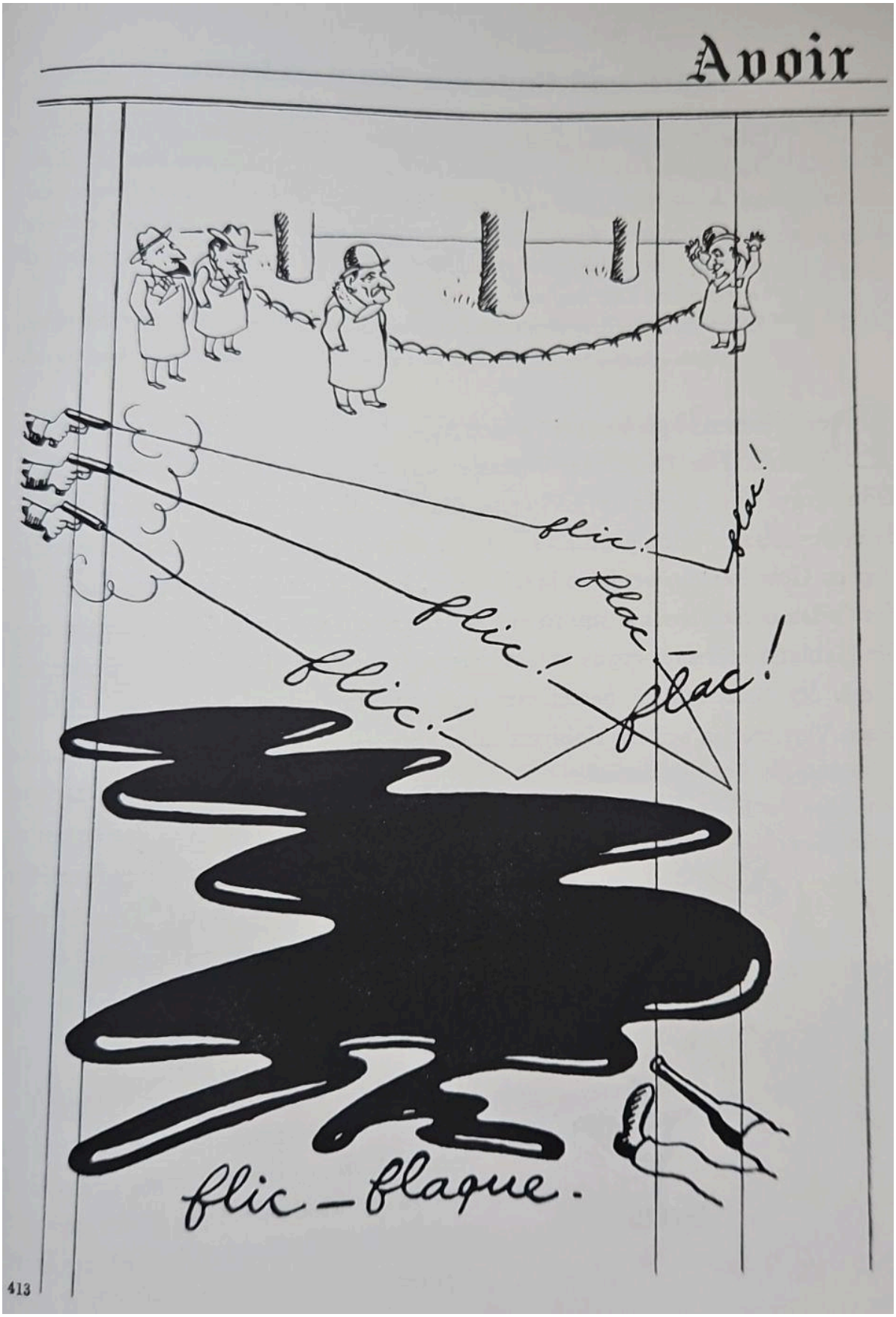

Avoir
flic!
flac!
flic!
flac!
flic!
flac!
flic – flaque.
413

The Success and Conclusion of State Reform

“My loyalty to the rules of the parliamentary regime and the democratic institutions forbids me from forming a minority cabinet. Furthermore, I would fear that the formation of such a cabinet would provide those whose policy is aimed at the general overthrow and downfall of our country with the means to undermine the country's essential policy, which is imbued with patriotism and the republican spirit, and thus promote their own goals.
I therefore have the honor of presenting you with my resignation and that of my colleagues.”
- Prime Minister Paul [Gaston] Doumergue to the French President, November 9th, 1934

For the time being, February 6th, 1934 marked the end of the left's domination. Pressure from public opinion forced the appointment of Paul Doumergue as Prime Minister. He was tasked with carrying out a “reform of the state” and to curtail the all-too-exuberant parliamentary powers. Paul Doumergue demanded the right to dissolve parliament in order to keep parliament in check and to slow down the cabinet's rush; he wanted to carry out the work of state reform together with the Radical Socialists, whose representatives sat in his cabinet. They let him down at a crucial moment. Paul Doumergue did not dare to govern against parliament and to jump the barrier of formal legality. The experiment in state reform had failed.

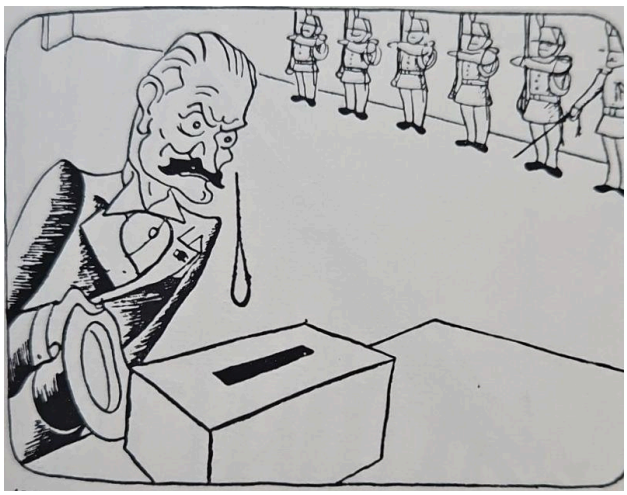
(414)
Doumergue had a pebble in his shoe (the parliament) when he wanted to move forward. He knew where the shoe pinched him, but he didn't throw the pebble away as the drawing shows.

The successors of Doumergue followed the beaten track; they fought with parliament for “authorizations” that were sometimes given, sometimes refused, but always only issued for a short time. The relationship between parliament and the government remained as Marshal [Louis-Hubert] Lyauty had once described it: it was exhausted by the formula, “Defendant, stand up!”

In April 1936, the people were given the opportunity to vote in the popular elections, which brought the Popular Front to power.

(415)

A cyclone, says the illustrator, devastated France; a leaf storm swept over the no longer very resilient parliament, and its already somewhat decrepit politicians.



(416)

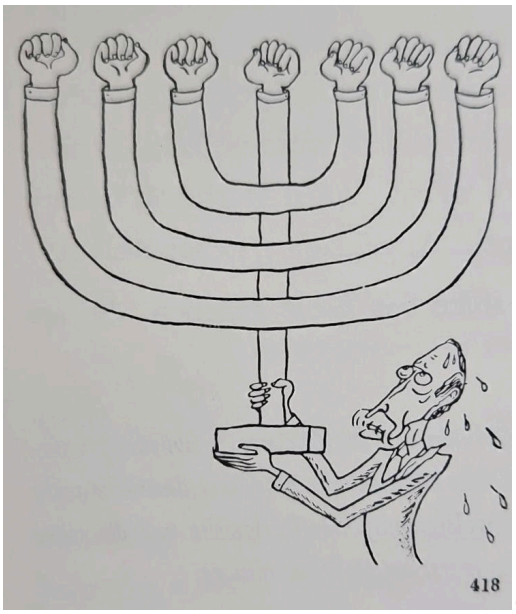
When President [Albert] Lebrun fulfilled his duty to vote, he let a big tear fall into the urn, in sorrow for what was to come.

(417)

The Popular Front had triumphed. "Where is the animal tamer?", was the question at the heart of the political conundrum.

The Blum Experiment

Now France embarked on a new experiment - the "Blum Experiment". The Popular Front took over in France with the Blum cabinet. The Communists did not enter the cabinet; they gave it parliamentary support, however, and otherwise gave the orders.



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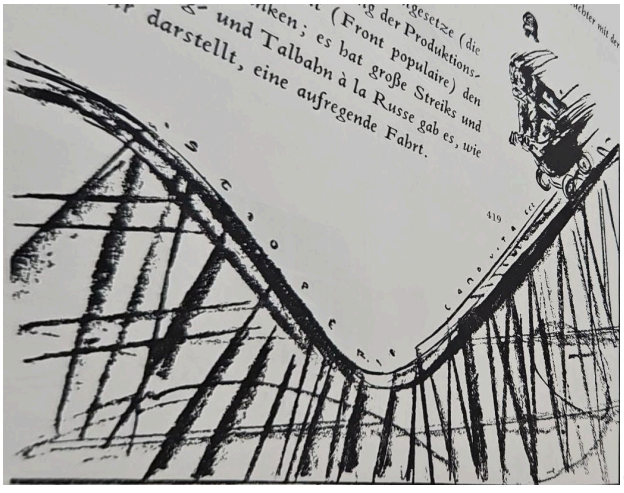
The ritual candelabrum now shone over France with the clenched fist as an ornament.



(419)

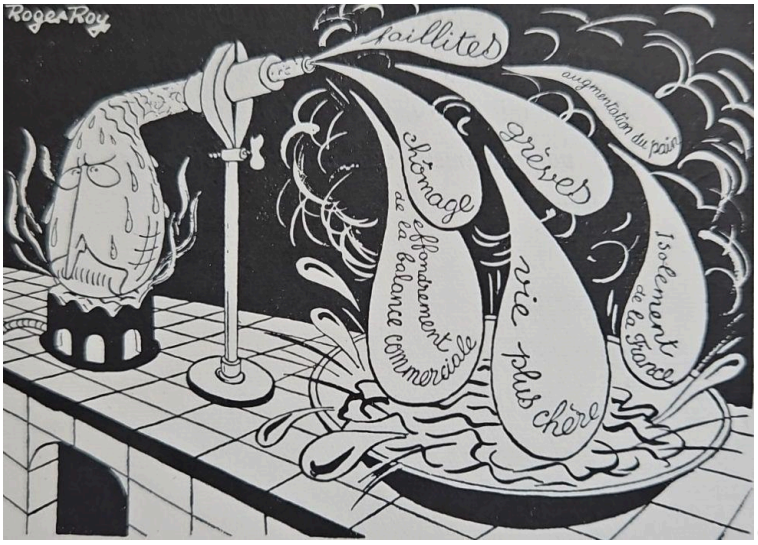
The experiment has its excitements; it has the social laws (the 40-hour week and the like) with the increase in production costs. It has, as a gift from the Popular Front, the devalued franc; it has large strikes and factory occupations. On the rollercoaster à la Russe, as the Italian cartoon shows, there was an exciting ride.

(420)

The Sarraut cabinet now had to make the transition to a Popular Front cabinet. Here the fitting was done with the needles of the Popular Front (the three arrows), and there were many stitches.

(421)

The Marseillaise was sung in a new way: "Come on, kids, Blum's day is here!"

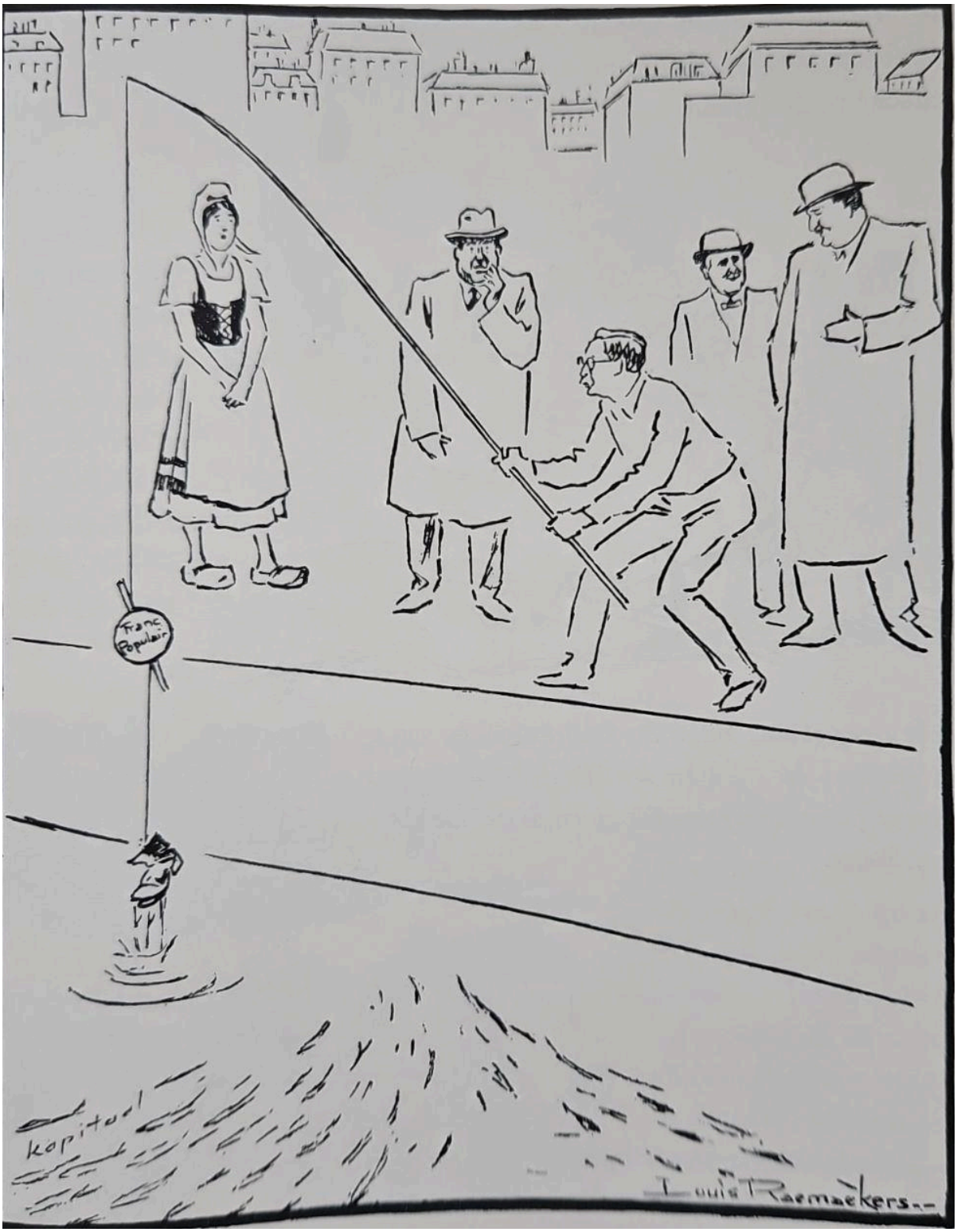


(422)

In the Blum experiment, a lot was concocted in the "retort" – at least that is how the French legal press sees it: strikes, unemployment, bankruptcies, inflation, etc.

(423)

Of the fruits of the "experiment," the factory occupations were the most bitter for the government. According to a statement by the government, the factories were to be cleared of the workers "by all appropriate means"; heroic means were not shunned either. The Minister of the Interior called on the aid of State Secretary [Cécile] Brunschvicg, one of the ornaments of the Popular Front government. "Run," they called to the French workers, who were to be lured out of the factories. "The first one here will get a kiss from Comrade Brunschvicg!" The French workers are said to have withstood the temptation.

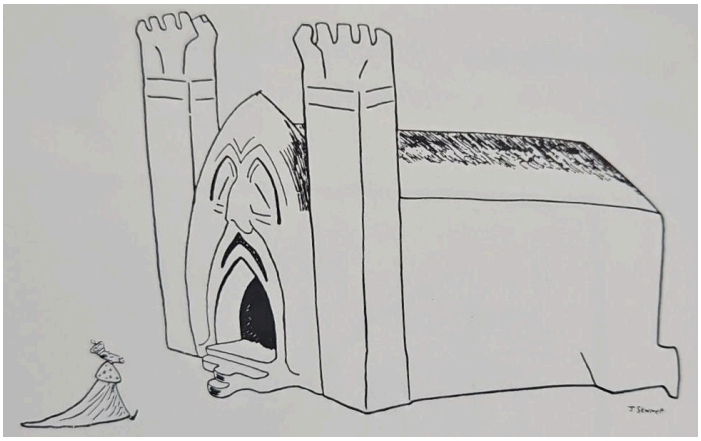


(424)

Capital fled. The government went over to the collection plate. Bonds with very large discounts were issued. But with the "franc populaire" as bait, no good catch was made.

The Popular Front and its Masters

The trade unions and the communists were asked to join the government; they didn't want to go along for the ride, but they got to hold the whip.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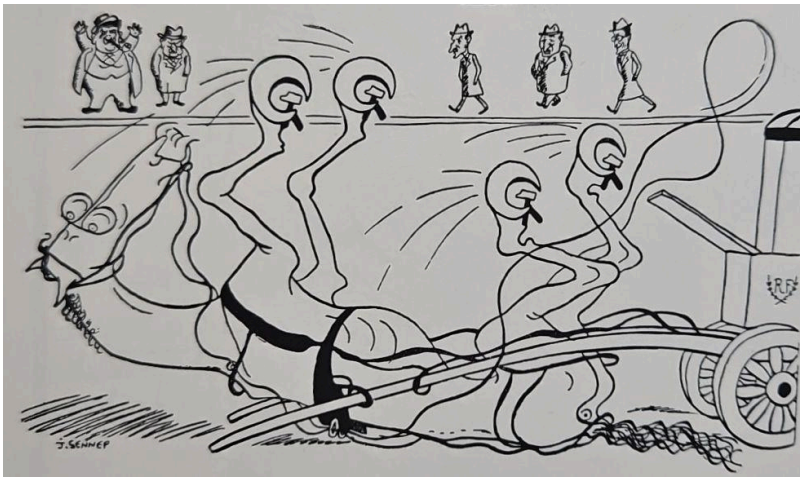
The leader of the trade unions, Léon Jouhaux, is the éminence grise of the Popular Front government. He holds countless offices in the new France, and when the coronation took place in England, there was also a coronation in France.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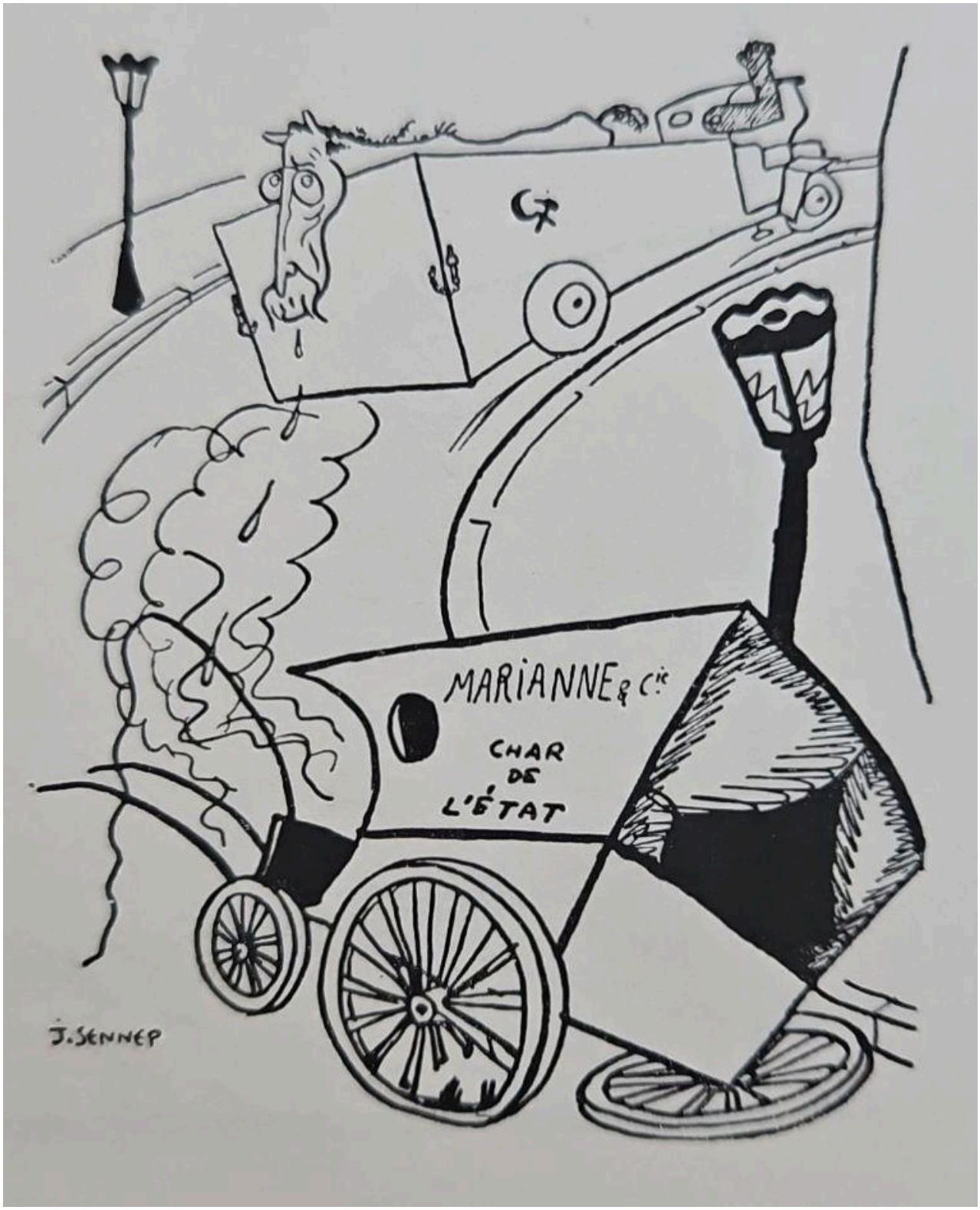
The Communists held the reins quite tightly. They whipped the horse in front of the car of the Popular Front government (Léon Blume) forward until it fell, its four hooves in the air.



(427)

The knacker arrives to drag the horse away when it has fallen with the French state's wagon.

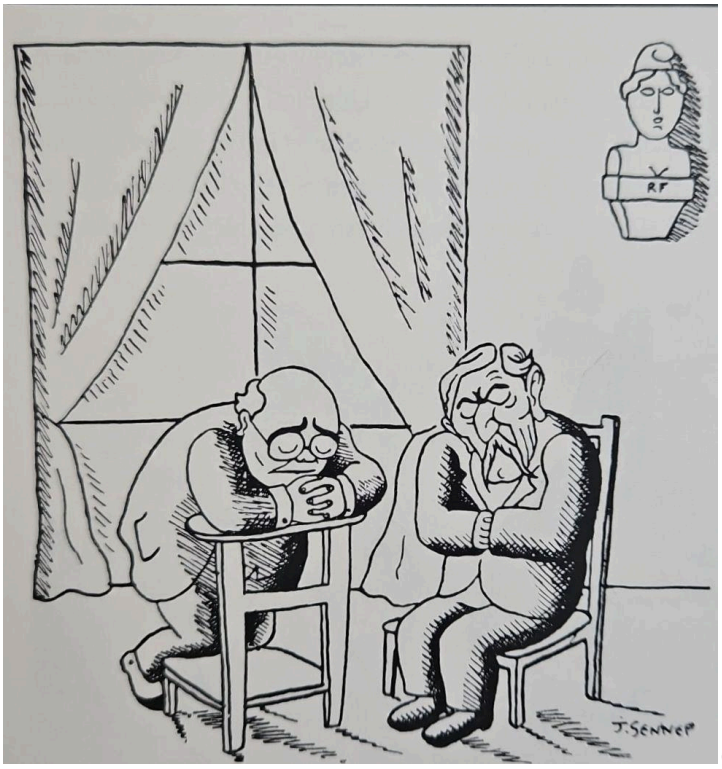
The Popular Front in France is still a very well-kept and cultured affair. Léon Blum is an educated mind, elegant in thought and posture. There are literary and social salons in France where Bolshevik ideas can be consumed in the midst of the most perfect social forms, with the greatest wit and over the most exquisite meals.

(428)

"Excellency Blum" has her suitors. The dragoon, however, is a little more frightening. But he assures the Excellency: "Everything is alright, Madam Marquise!"

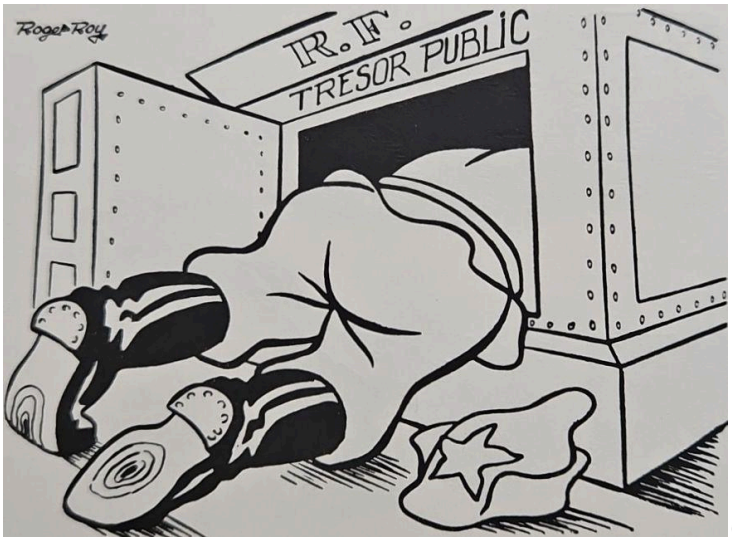
(429)

In good company, you feel the storm – but perhaps you can avert it by friendly cooperation and appease it by sympathetic accommodation! So you, like many a high-ranking lady, wear the Soviet star as a lightning rod.



(430)

There is a "republican contrition" when, as in this picture, the communist leader [Marcel] Cachin takes confession from the radical socialist [Albert] Sarraut: "You pray as penance six internationals and three 'The Soviets above all!'"

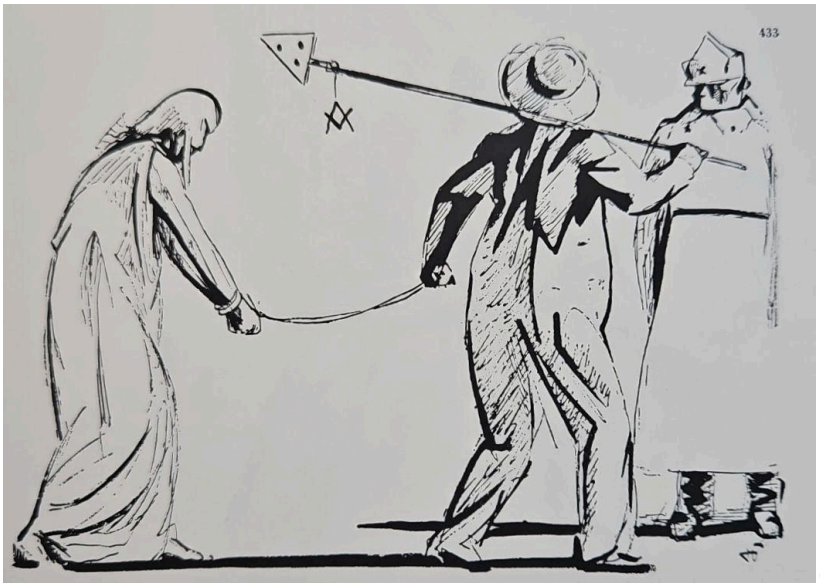


(431)

Only "Soviets everywhere" (Les Soviets partout) could have an ugly real-life meaning.

(432)

After Stalin's rampage against the leaders of the Red Army, the Soviet Pact is no longer a comfortable prospect for Marianne.



(433)

Marianne is treading an uncertain path. Will she be led to the slaughter under the sign of Freemasonry, or will she – as one must hope in the interest of peace and prosperity in the Occident – shake off the evil spirits and take the path of true national renewal?

4. Problems of English Life

"I tremble at the thought of what the consequence of a weak government in England would be in the current European situation."

- Stanley Baldwin

Fortunate Island

"We believed that we had more political instinct than any country in Europe. That may be true, but we live in an age when distances are vanishing. That means that ideas know no frontiers and race across humanity as fast as radio and the press and all the other concomitants of our civilization."
- Stanley Baldwin, on October 29th 1934

England has been praised as a great happy island throughout the centuries. Protected by the waves of the sea, situated outside the thick of the conflict between nations, the island has led a life of its own. It has therefore been less affected by the upheaval that has reshaped the lives of nations in the aftermath of the war.

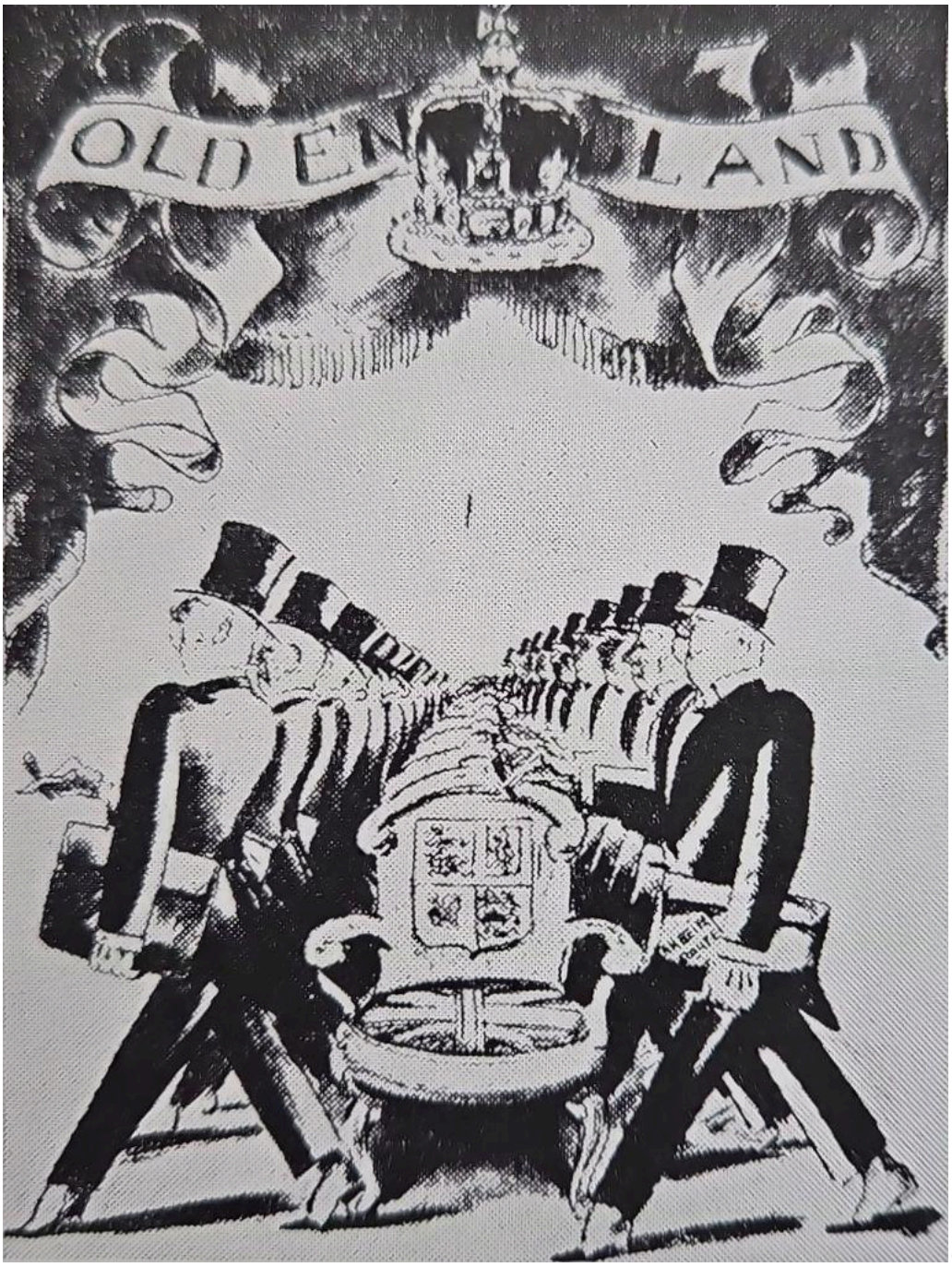
England felt secure in its tradition. But the world crisis has also knocked at its gates. The upheavals in the world economy have taken away the unique advantage it had at the height of the capitalist world economy. Today, there is a widespread belief in England that the British nation has rested on the laurels of its old economic conquests. Today, there are slum areas in the English coalfields and elsewhere where life has been dead for years, where generations follow one another without employment, where young people do not know what work is, where a monotonous, grinding poverty holds sway. In the post-war period, England has also experienced major national crises: the great miners' strike as a result of the hardship in the coal industry, the general strike of 1926, when England felt a cold hand gripping its national existence, the naval strike, the financial crisis and the devaluation of the pound in 1931.

All these were warning signs in the sky. But England did not yet see the hour for the "heroic measures" - as they call the extraordinary act in Great Britain. But after all, as its national hero Oliver Cromwell once said, "the reason of necessity, which justifies the actions of men," also prevails over the life forms of England.

(434)

In 1928, England still seemed to be a lonely island, adrift in the wreckage of the great strikes and the economic crisis, with the emergency flag of the general strike flying.

His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Extremely Loyal Opposition



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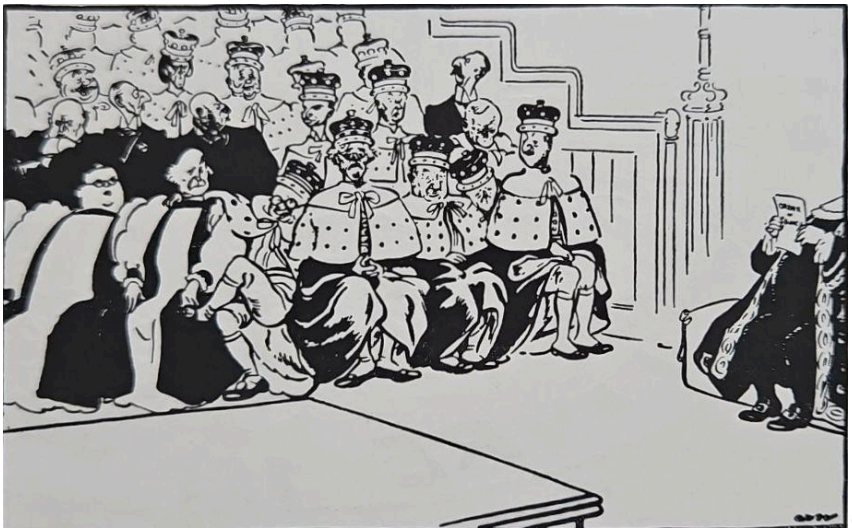
Throughout it all, the English political style remained fairly unchanged. When the Labour government came to power in 1929, this "revolutionary change in English government policy" seemed to be the equivalent of exchanging one egg for another.



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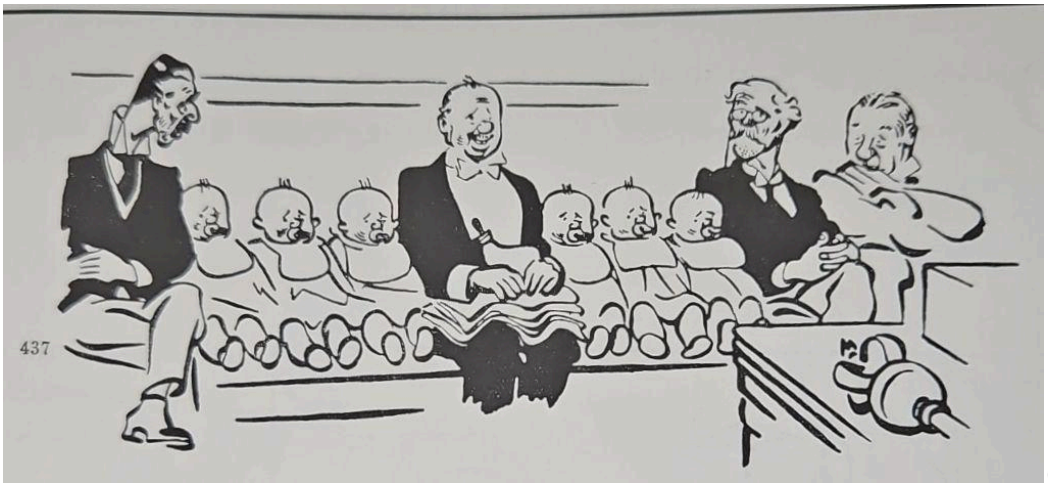
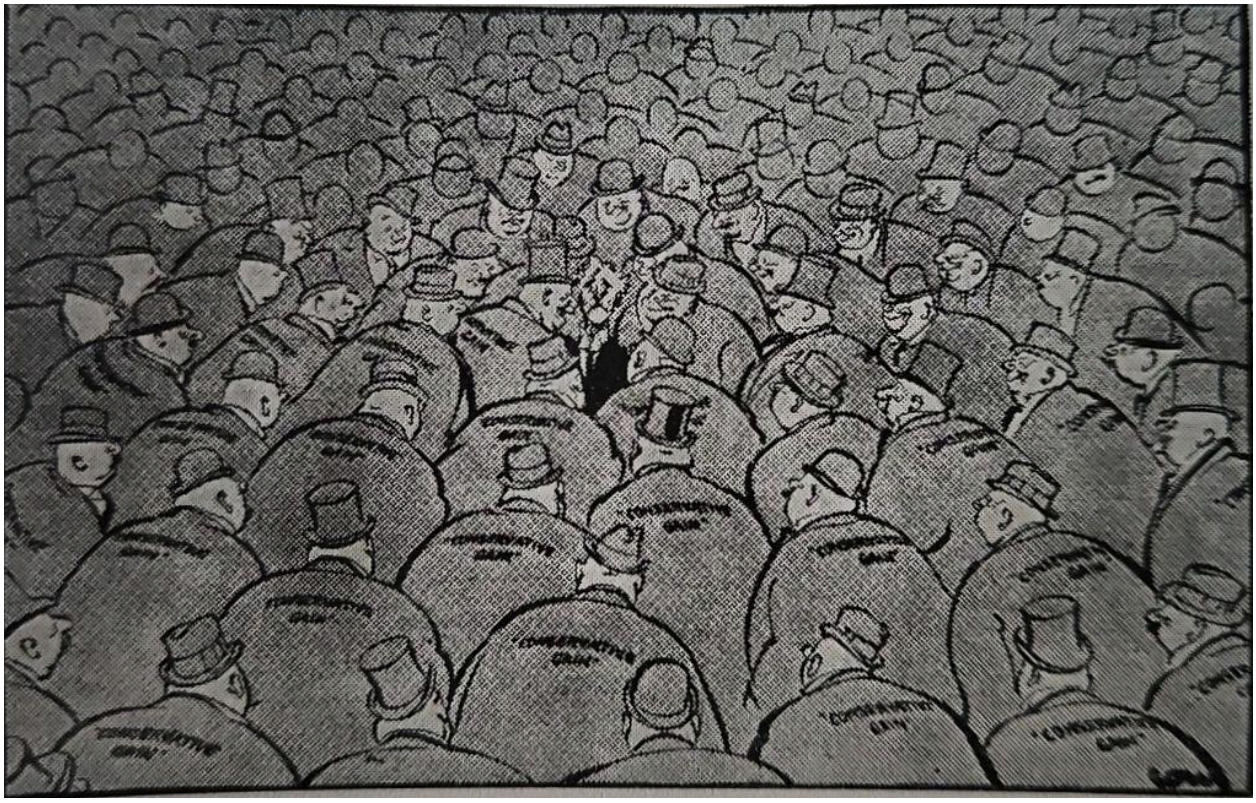
Even the "heroic measures" of English politics remained true to the style of Old England. At the climax of the political crisis of 1931, the great English illustrator [David] Low imagined that the "enfant terrible" of English politics, Churchill, had become Prime Minister and was now (the peerage push is, after all, an old device of English parliamentary politics) getting rid of the opposition parties by making all the members of the Labour Party and the Liberal Party dukes and barons and thus planting them in the House of Lords. The old English nobility are now sitting, squeezed in and amazed, among the new English peerage (in the front row you can see "Jim" Thomas, MacDonald, Baldwin, Sir Herbert Samuel).



(437)

After the collapse of the Labor government, the Conservative Party, the National Labor Party, and the National Liberal Party formed the national government under MacDonald. However, the bulk of their followers formed the Conservative Party. This provided plenty of material for caricature. MacDonald demanded - Low imagines - more labor members of the government; so, Jim Thomas has to call on his six famous grandchildren to join the government. They sit on the government bench in parliament; "Jim" watches over them; "Mac" has not lost his professorial consecration; only Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain are not sure whether the cabinet is really "left high and dry" and is really "keeping quiet".

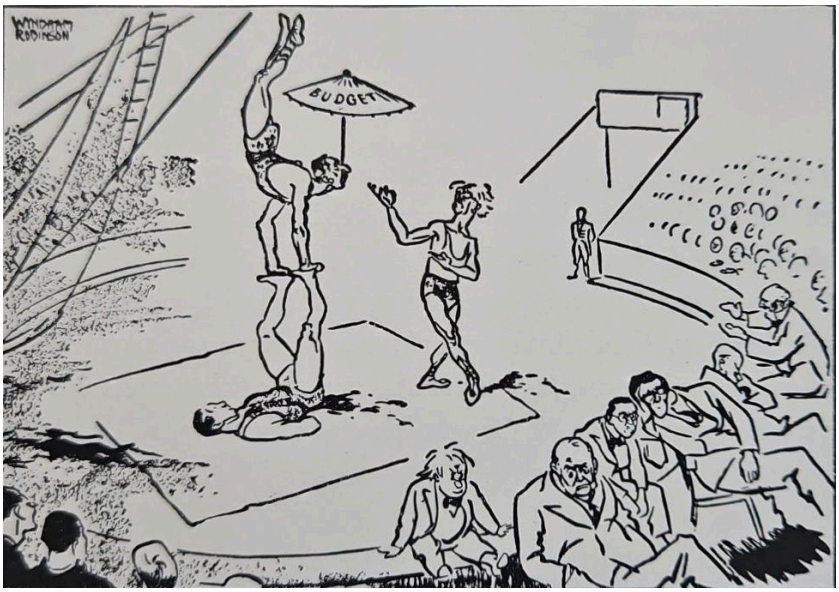


(438)

The elections, which were intended to give the MacDonald government a free hand, resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Conservatives, and MacDonald is being congratulated on the "free hand" he now has.

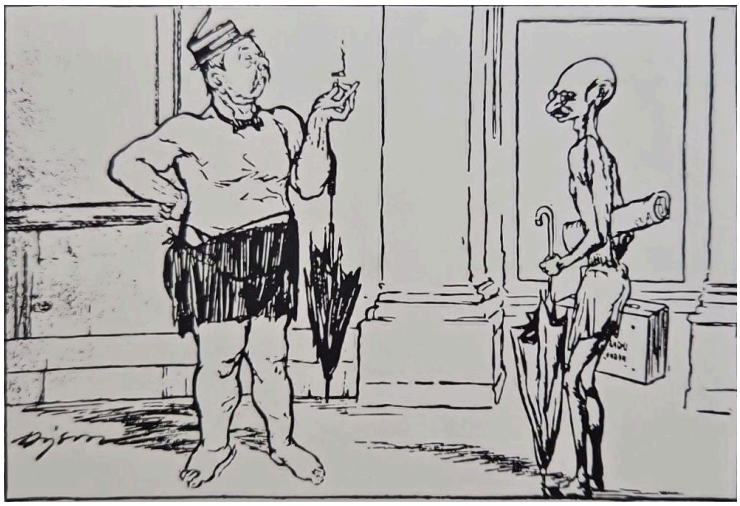
England's Worries

The Happy Island also has its concerns. The biggest of these concerns in everyday life is the budget, and the biggest of the English complaints are - as elsewhere - the taxes.



(439)

The budget speech is always regarded as the great event and the great feat of English politics: Neville Chamberlain performs the acrobatic feat of "balancing the budget" on the taxpayer; MacDonald has the announcement; the leaders of the opposition (Lloyd George, [George] Lansbury, [Clement] Attlee, [James] Maxton) turn their backs and don't want to see anything.


(440)

The socialist Snowden's budget is a horrifying memory for British taxpayers. When the completely plundered taxpayer encounters Gandhi, who is also approaching paradisiacal conditions, he exclaims: "Hello, old chap, you know Snowden too?"

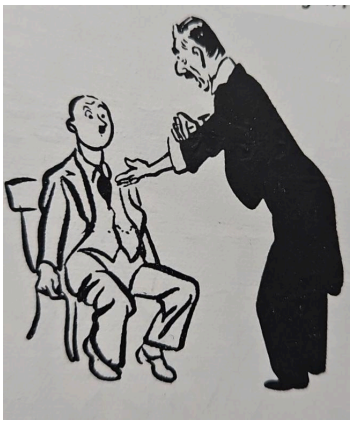
There were also corresponding illustrations for Neville Chamberlain's “Budget Day” in 1937.

(441)

“Would a member of the audience (the taxpayer, that is) like to help me with my well-known budget trick?

(442)

Sit down, you don't need to be nervous.


(443)

That's right, now watch carefully: I have nothing under my sleeves.

(444)

And now that you are sure that there is no deception,

(445)

get up."

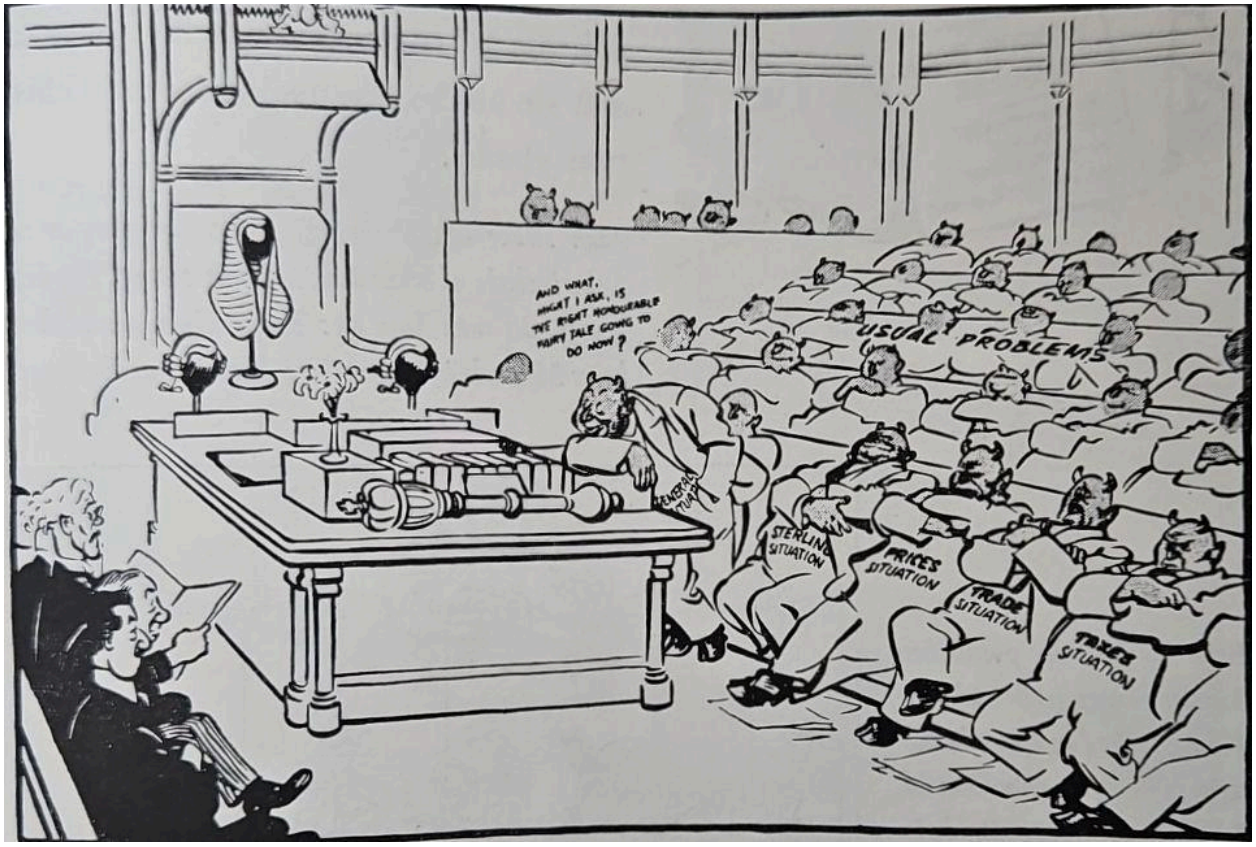
But there were also more serious concerns. The depressed areas have been little affected by the economic upturn that England has enjoyed in recent years; they have been called “the eyesores of English life”. Britain has also borne the burden of a slow decline in unemployment in the post-war years. A certain unavoidable minimum of unemployment often seemed to be accepted as a given, “a minimum” of a terrible plague that slowly degenerated people into the futility of miserable idleness. The island does indeed have its “worries”.

(446)

The emergency areas shouted lamentations and accusations to the heavens.

(447)

The spirit of the state of emergency roams through the solemnly serene assembly, which meets contentedly with the world and with itself.

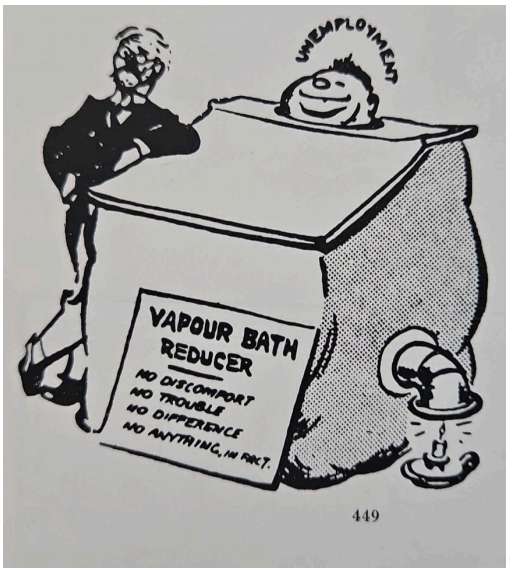

AND WHAT, I ASK, IS THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FAIRY TALE GOING TO DO NOW?
USUAL PROBLEMS
STERLING SITUATION
PRICES SITUATION
TRADE SITUATION
TAXES SITUATION

(448)

After the victory of the national government, it was said that there was practically no opposition left. The opposition benches in parliament (the chamber of the English parliament is divided into two halves, that of the government and that of the opposition) are empty. But there were now darker figures, namely the serious questions of English economic life (the currency question, the tax question, etc.) that weighed far more than "His Majesty's Extremely Loyal Opposition".

Do-Nothing Government?

In England, too, voices have been raised in favour of a national plan to eliminate unemployment in a major effort by the whole nation and to carry out a renewal and modernization of English economic life. Calls were made for public works to provide England with new roads, canals, power stations, new houses, and new land through drainage and reclamation. The government was accused of waiting for the economy to take off by itself, of believing in the gospel of doing nothing.



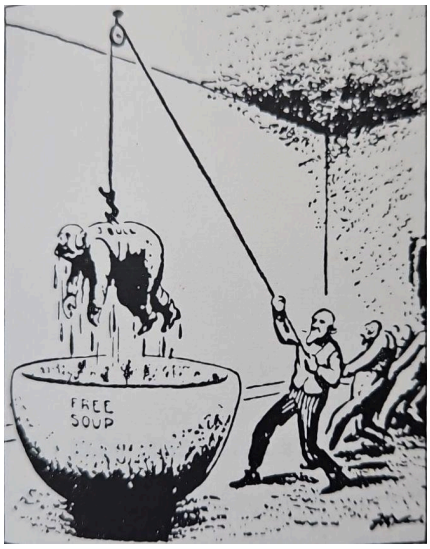
(449)

Put the fat man in a sweat bath and then heat with a candle. This cure is then praised: No discomfort, no effort, no difference, no anything at all!

(450)

At the banquet of political magicians there are great and many art pieces (at the back table MacDonald, Lloyd George, Baldwin, Mahatma Churchill); but the starving unemployed man looking over the wallpaper wonders, "Can any of the magicians produce work?"

The days of the liberal economy were over, even in England. Great Britain, once the Holy Grail of free trade, has been a protective customs country for years.



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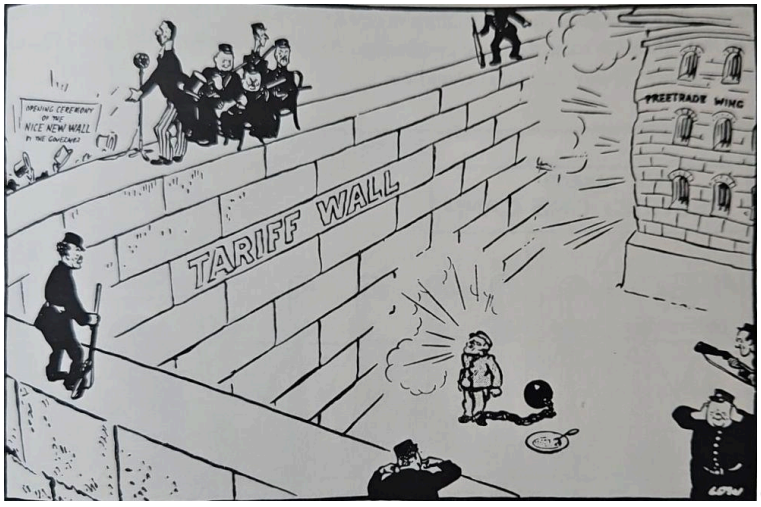
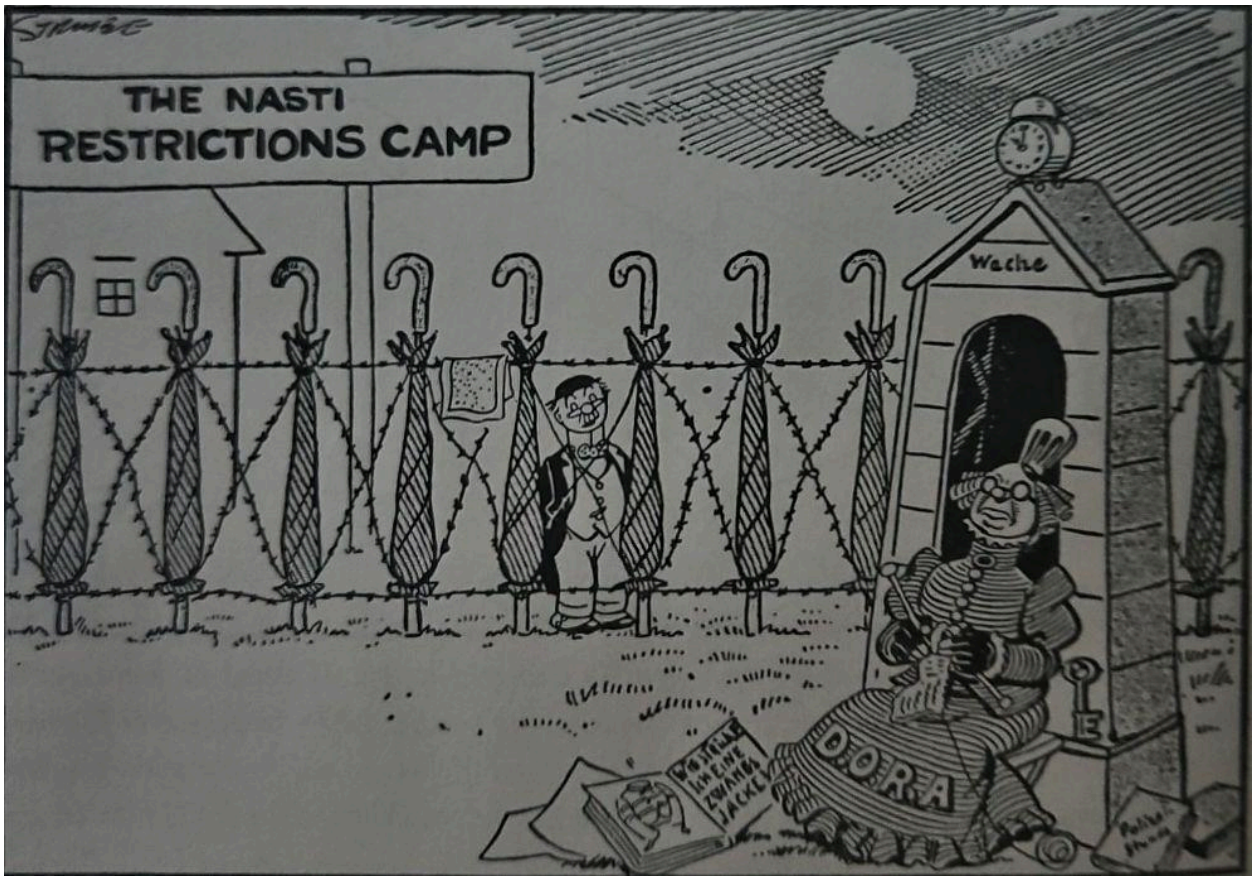
American liberals wistfully watch the celebrations for Britain's admission to the protectionist club, with England being baptized in "free soup". (For the free trader, protective tariff always means state subsidy and state gift).



(452)

There was also resistance to the protective tariff policy in England itself. While riots broke out in the English prison of Dartmoor, things also came to life - according to Low - on political Dartmoor. Neville Chamberlain was just inaugurating the beautiful new customs wall when Snowden, a fierce free trader and long since the great enfant terrible of English politics, shouted out a wild protest from behind the bars of disinfluence.

Conversion



(453)

Old ways of life are changing; old concepts and values are beginning to disintegrate. People are rebelling against some of the "paternalism" established by the Puritan spirit in England. They attacked the restrictions that made it impossible to go to the movies and the theater on Sunday, that made it impossible for an adult to get alcohol in a restaurant after 11 o'clock in the evening (after 10 o'clock on Sunday). Thus, the cartoon depicts a "Nasty Restrictions Camp".

(454)

Finally, however, England has undergone the greatest and most significant change in recent years: the return to big power politics. "England's borders lie on the Rhine", Stanley Baldwin once said. This was not to say that England was now standing guard on the Rhine, but that it was once again becoming aware of its involvement in the great struggle of the world and in European issues. Great Britain has taken upon herself a tremendous effort of armament, which is affecting English life right down to the bottom. The English Gulliver seemed to cast off the illusions of peace. Stanley Baldwin quoted from a book by [Frederick Scott] Oliver on Robert Walpole when the British armaments policy began in 1934 with its first great jolt. This quotation best characterizes the change and the great silent revolution that has taken place in England in recent years.

"People whose home is Great Britain cannot escape their special environment. Isolation is the outgrowth of a sick imagination. Tired of seemingly insoluble confusion, haunted by endless challenges, haunted by the memory of a thousand past slights, British statesmen have sometimes been tempted to tell the other nations of Europe to go their way and let us go ours in peace. But the heart of the matter is that none of us can go our own way. If we allow our prestige to decline, if we shirk responsibility and let things happen without us, in other words, if we stop caring whether our strength is recognized or not, whether our voice is heard in the Council of Europe or not, then we forfeit the essential guarantee of our independence. We run the risk of our own demise, we damage the whole fabric of the continent. Confusion and disaster will follow as surely as if one of the planets of the solar system were to cease its orbit."

- F. S. Oliver in "The Endless Adventure"

5. Change and Crisis in the United States

"All over the world, change is on the agenda."
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Crisis of American Capitalism

"We need enthusiasm, imagination and the courage to face reality, even if it is unpleasant. We must, if necessary, use harsh measures to correct the deficiencies of our economic system. We need the courage of youth."

- Roosevelt

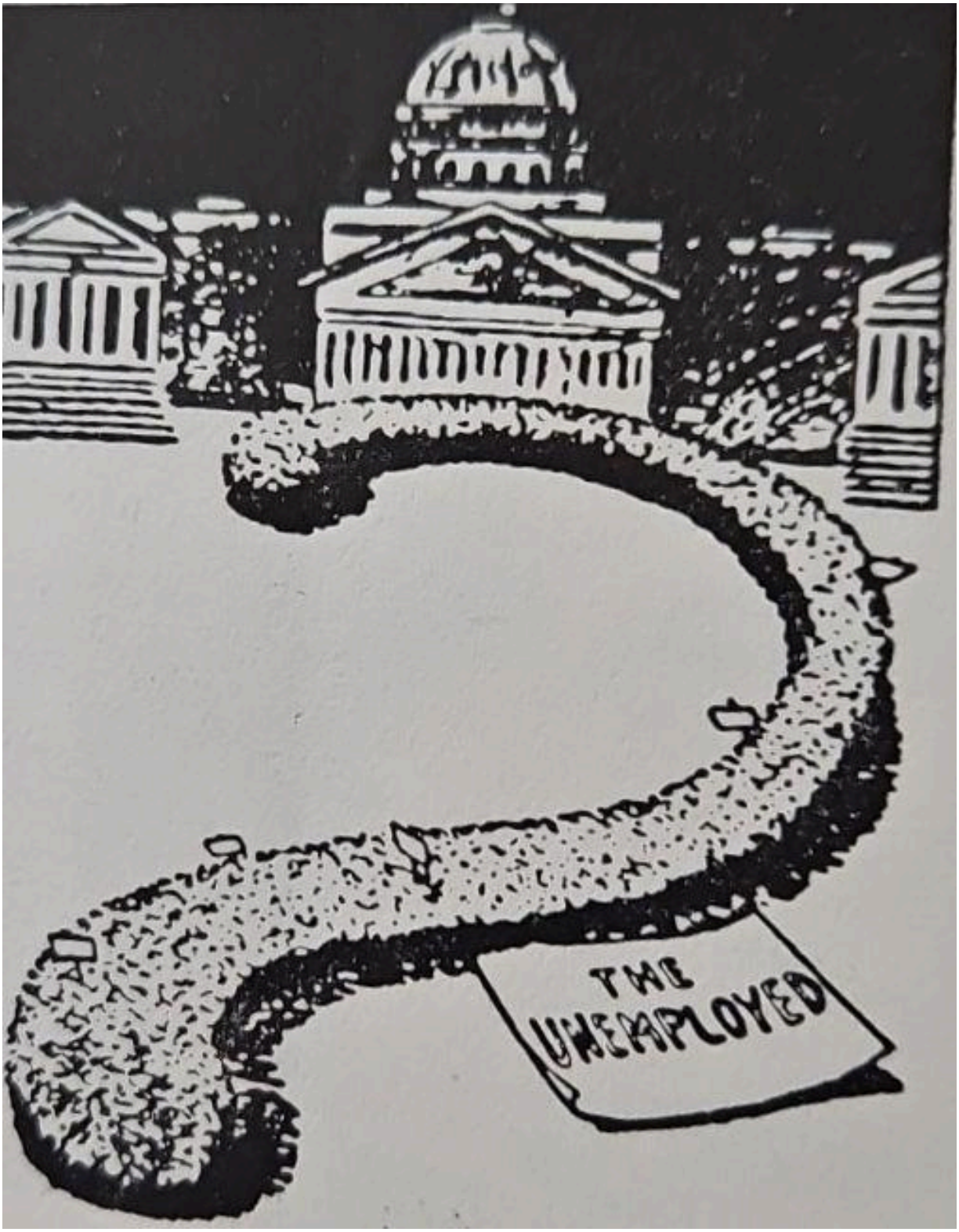
"America, you have it better than our continent, the old one" - this echo was sung about America's inner life no less than about its fortunate 'remoteness from the strife of the world.' Land of unlimited possibilities and overflowing wealth, America seemed like a social paradise. Although there was tremendous wealth there, the gateway to that wealth seemed to be open to everyone. Most felt they could say, "Today you are the millionaire; tomorrow it will be me." Vacant, undeveloped land in the west created a social safety valve: the west was a refuge for all those who could no longer make it. Social barriers seemed to fall. The way to the top was always open. Poverty and misery seemed to be the heritage only of the incapable and were seen as a judgment from God. The "free play of forces" had thus become a tenet of religion.

In 1929, the United States was hit by the economic crisis; it came with a terrible force over a country that had remained without any social safety net in the belief that everyone could help themselves. Agriculture was on the brink of disaster, and in 1933 the banks closed their counters, half of them forever. An army of millions of unemployed was dependent on private charity. The magic word "free rein to the hardworking" had now lost its power. Into the promised land of economic freedom, phenomena that had previously been condemned as vices of a foreign world were now making their appearance. "Is it a crisis like the others, too?", people in the USA began to ask themselves. Is it a crisis that shakes people up, forcing the rich to start from scratch and giving the poor new opportunities? A crisis that, as a broom of providence, sweeps the old and rotten onto the rubbish heap of history?

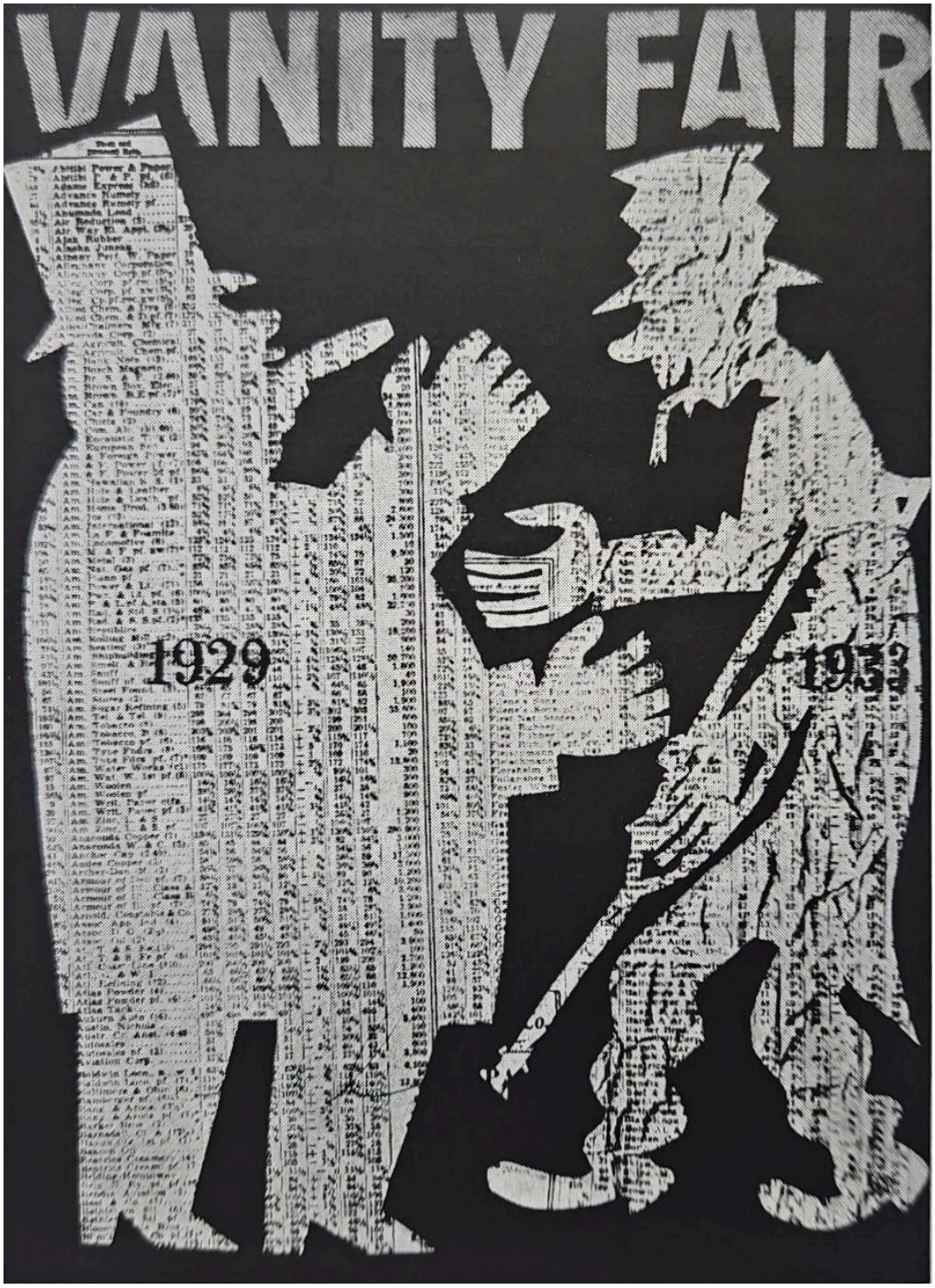
But the crisis seemed to be more than that: a fundamental reversal and an idol's twilight were announced. In 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president of the United States. He announced a "New Deal" – a reorganization of American life. He opposed the state's "doing nothing"; he proclaimed that he would stand or fall on his refusal to accept millions of unemployed as a permanent fact. The phantom of inexhaustible wealth had so far prevented the nation from consciously "budgeting". America had not prevented the overexploitation of forests and fields (after all, the land seemed infinite); no one had taken precautions against soil erosion, marshes and the like. Now nature was taking a terrible revenge. Large areas have become marshy; others are silting up; large areas (the size of smaller European countries) have become "a man-made Sahara". The era of idly "letting nature take its course" is over.

This is also how the "return of the state" is taking place in the USA. Large public works to combat unemployment, codes for industry, i.e. a kind of compulsory collective agreement with regulations on minimum wages and maximum working hours, social legislation, cultivation regulations for agriculture, the fight against financial power as a state within a state, reveal a new will on the part of the state to have a share in economic life even at times other than when banks are bankrupt.

America, like the world, is therefore about to break new ground. The great crisis and the terrible scourge of unemployment inevitably confront the leaders of intellectual and political life in the USA with the question:



(455)
America, where to?



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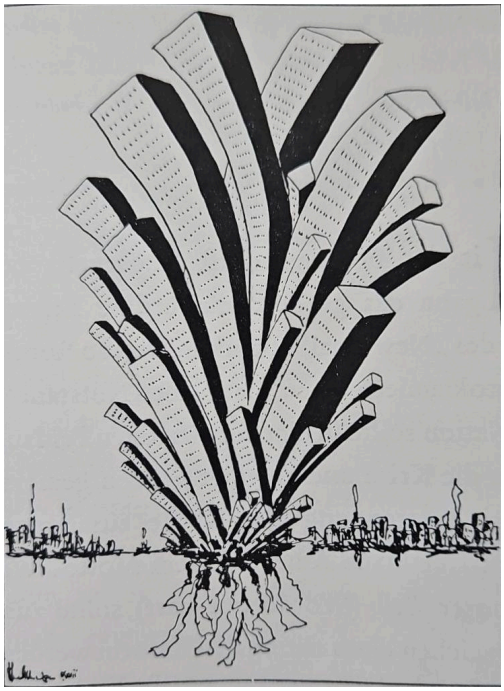
The proud image of American capitalism has been thoroughly destroyed in the course of the crisis. From 1929 to 1933, the American economy has lost a great deal of weight. The stock exchange already tells of the splendor and misery of the American economy.

 (457)

Now it became clear what a ghostly creature this American economy, which had suddenly shot up, really was.

(458)

The crisis brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt to power and sent President Herbert Hoover, the former mining engineer, "back on his way".

New Deal

"It is hereby declared that a state of emergency exists – an emergency brought about by widespread unemployment and industrial disruption, affecting trade between our states and with foreign countries, harming the general welfare, and undermining the standard of living of the American people."

- **Introduction of the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16th, 1933**

(459)

With the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the great and memorable experiment of the "New Deal" began. Roosevelt proclaimed a "national emergency" and called on the nation to join forces in a massive campaign against the crisis and to make a great joint effort. The blue eagle with the motto "We do our part" was to become the symbol of a national reform.

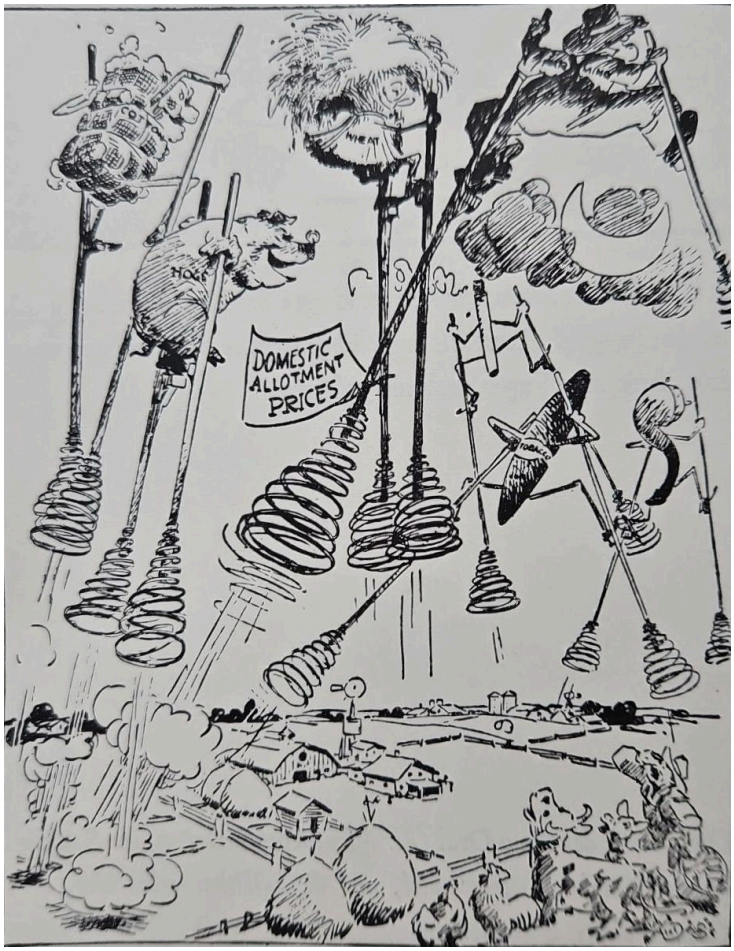
(460)

A new day was dawning for the U.S., New Deal supporters hoped.

“The most solemn commitments of the government have been denied. The state has been plunged into the greatest debt known in the history of our country. The currency has been shaken. The government has been subordinated to a huge bureaucratic, centralized apparatus in Washington that has dictatorially restricted the production of our industry... the cost of living is increasing daily, the number of people receiving benefits is constantly growing... the creative genius of our people, which alone can lead the way to recovery and an improvement in the standard of living, is being suppressed; the people are becoming poorer instead of richer. The theories of this government are wrong.”

- Herbert Hoover on March 23rd 1935 in Sacramento

Roosevelt's experiment was not without danger and not without resistance from the deeply rooted instincts of the American nation. It began with inflation - the New Deal wants to reshuffle all the cards, but so far everyone believes they can win more at the new game. A great social upheaval therefore accompanies the politics of the New Deal. Today there are enough demagogues in America who teach that you can win the world with these new cards.



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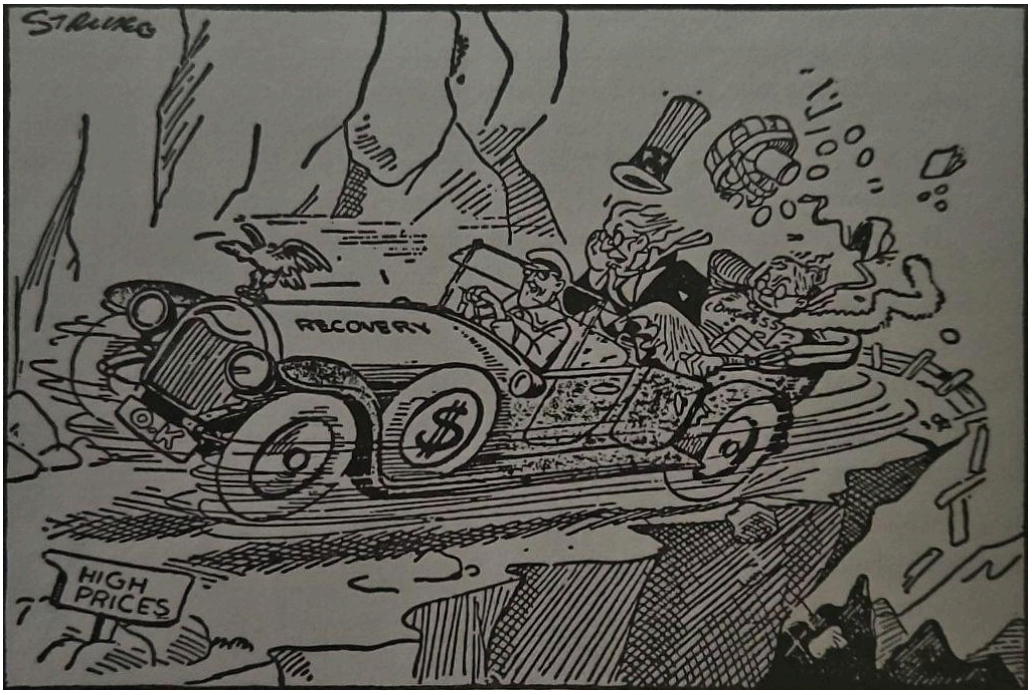
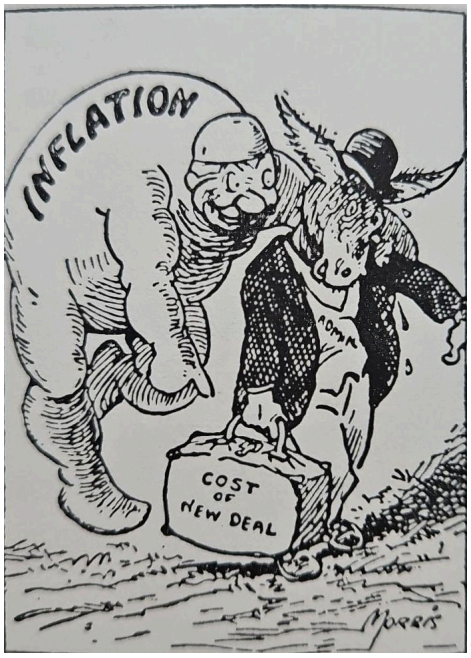
The price boom seemed to give everyone wings: pigs, cotton, tobacco; the farmers swirled through the air, as it were, propelled by inflation, in a ghostly witch's Sabbath.



(462)

It appeared that the New Deal was careening down a dangerous road. When Uncle Sam and Congress anxiously asked Roosevelt whether the brakes were working, he replied, "I don't know; I've never driven the car before."



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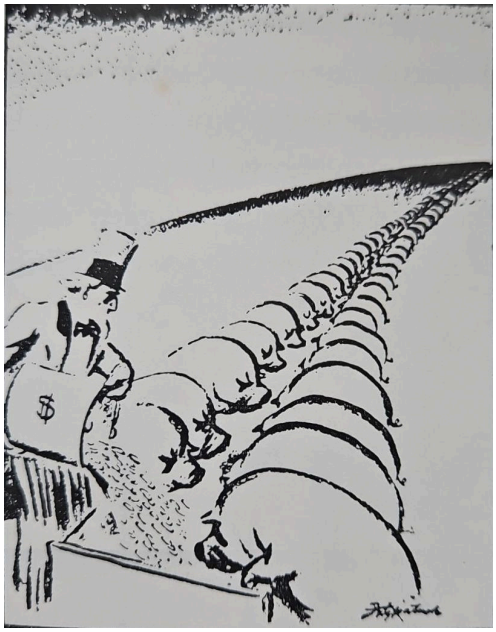
The New Deal policies (of public works, social legislation) costed a lot, and inflation offered to "carry" the baggage of these expenses.


(464)

The danger was evoked early on that the USA would become a giant feeding trough.

(465)

The new policy, the indictment went, wanted to conjure up "hidden money" and use it to pay subsidies and hand out gifts.

(466)

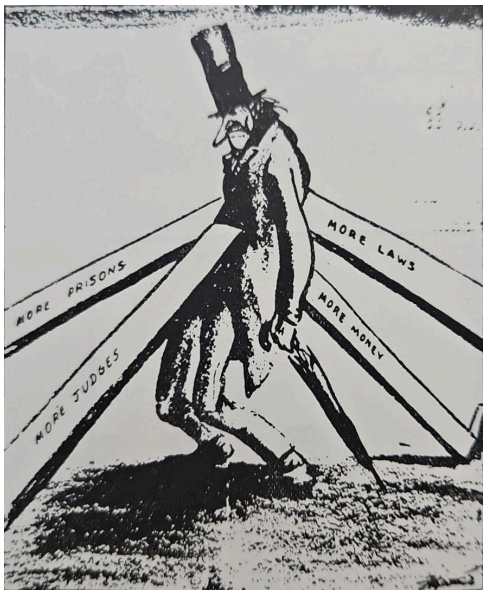
New skyscrapers seemed to be emerging: built from government bonds.

Prohibition – Utopia or Pipe Dream?

Another big question mark hung over American life: Prohibition. It was a memorable experiment; rarely has a lofty idealism been associated with so much narrow-minded and envious muckraking and so much low, even criminal, interest. Prohibition created a new gangsterism, alcohol smuggling; if all the violations of it had been punished, America would have had to convert its skyscrapers into prisons.

(467)

More and more enforcement officers were needed. When the smuggled alcohol began claiming victims, Death itself became an enforcement officer.



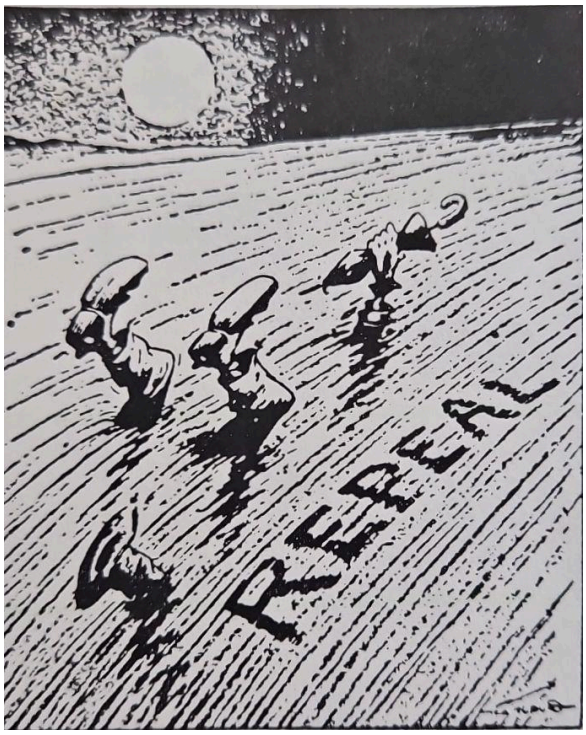
(468)

The experiment had to be supported again and again with "more money, more laws, more judges, more prisons".

(469)

Opponents of Prohibition believed that all the night birds of American life (crime, bribery, corruption, gangsterism) would eventually settle down: they had found their place.

The opponents of Prohibition (the “Wets”) increasingly gained the upper hand over the “Drys”. The song “Old Man River” was usually chosen as the mocking motto when the “flood” rose.



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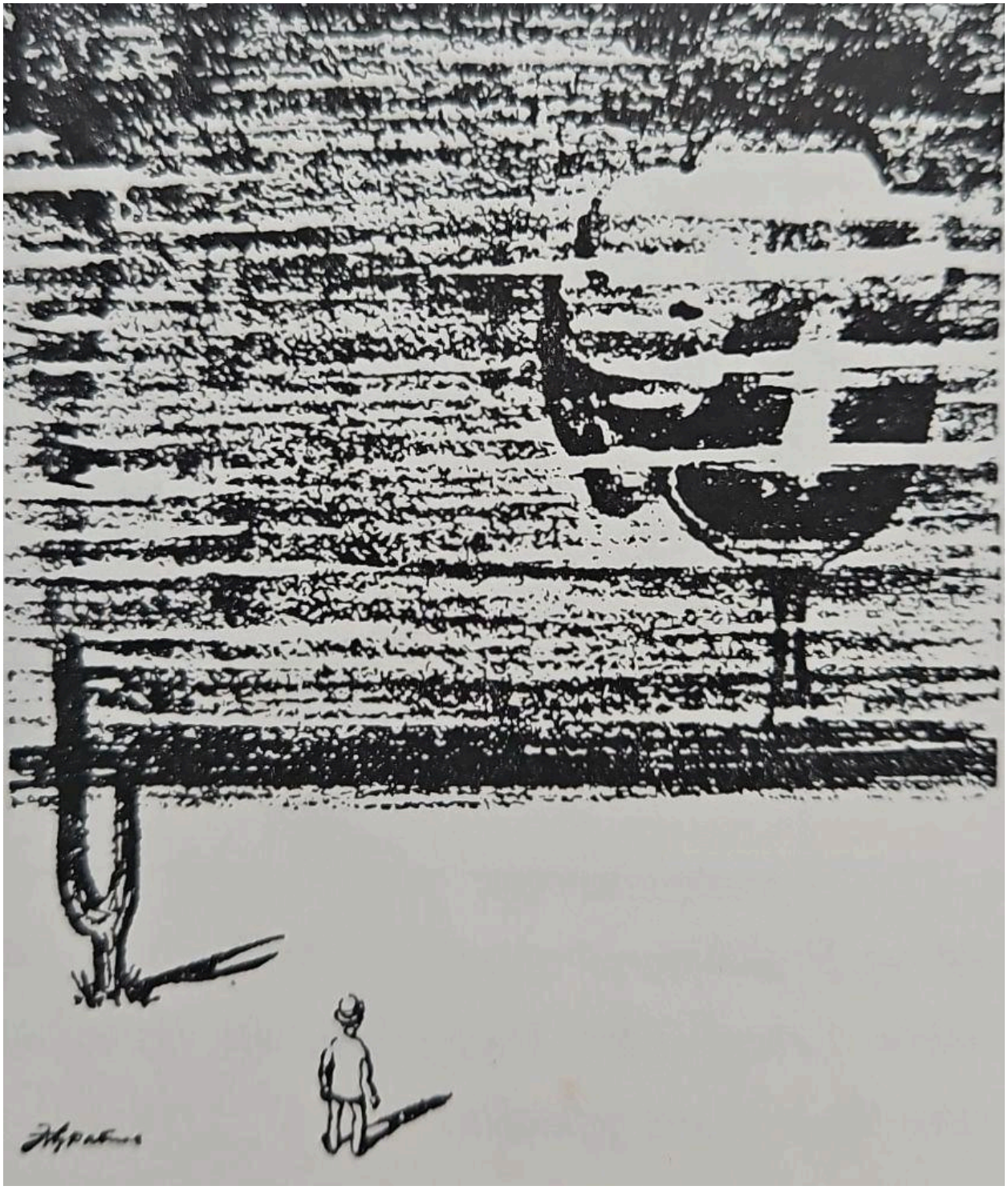
The old river rolled right along.

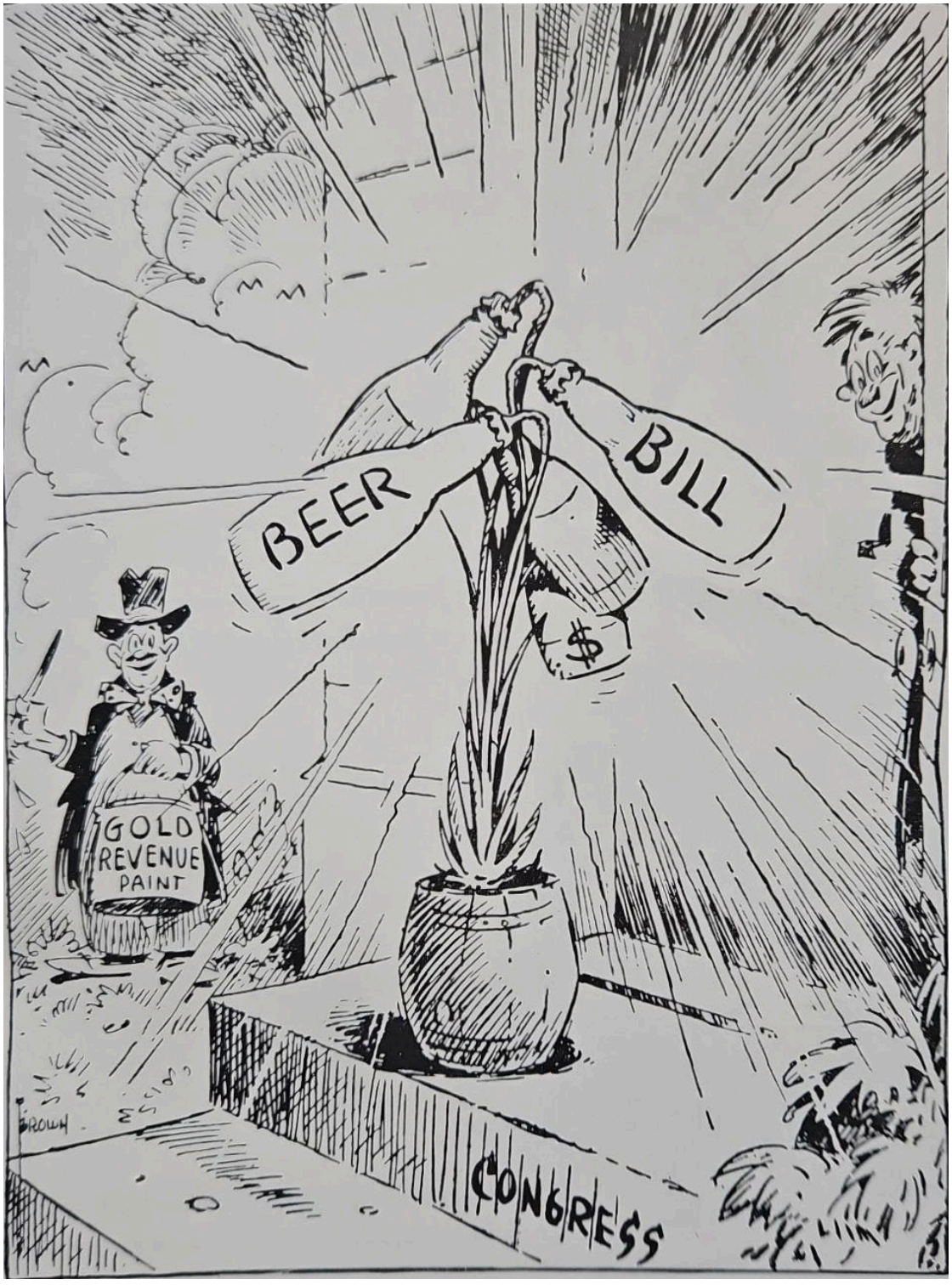
(471)

Soon a new wave of the “Wet” flood came from one side, and then from the other.



(472)

For many years, however, the specter of the repeal of Prohibition fooled the American people.

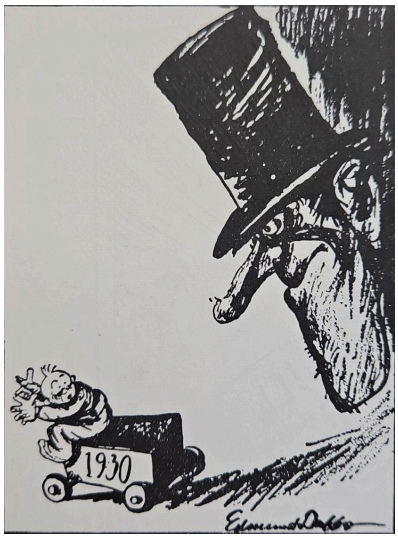


(473)

But finally, the "Beer Law" (which, to top it off, was given the golden touch of increased state revenues) bloomed beautifully.

Gangsterism

In the United States, the pure ideal of the New World is often held up in contrast to the “dark continent” of Europe; but there is also plenty to be cleaned up on one's own doorstep. There is organized crime, which is more than a terrible plague in American life - it is a power.



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A constant grimace so welcomed the years of American life and prosperity.

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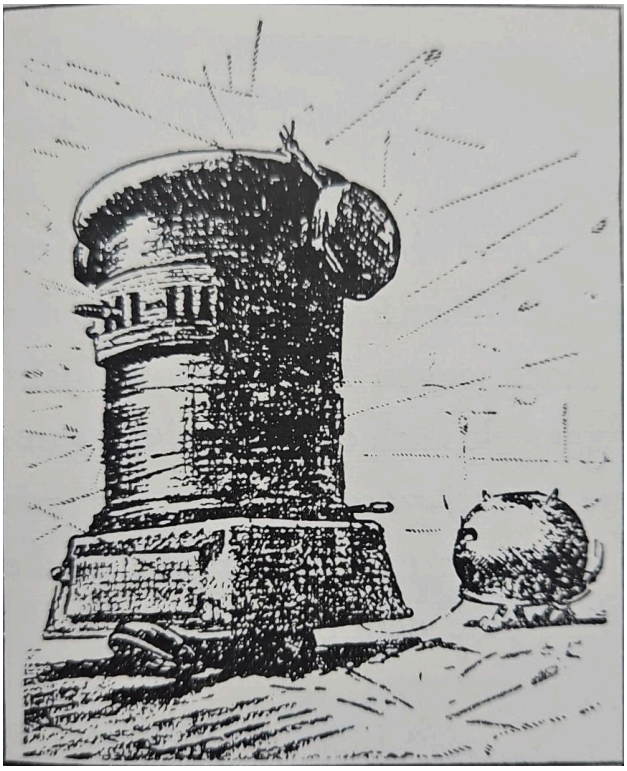
Where the big gangs settle, there is the most modern means of war. The illustrator can thus report from the gangster-infested place a strange battlefield report.



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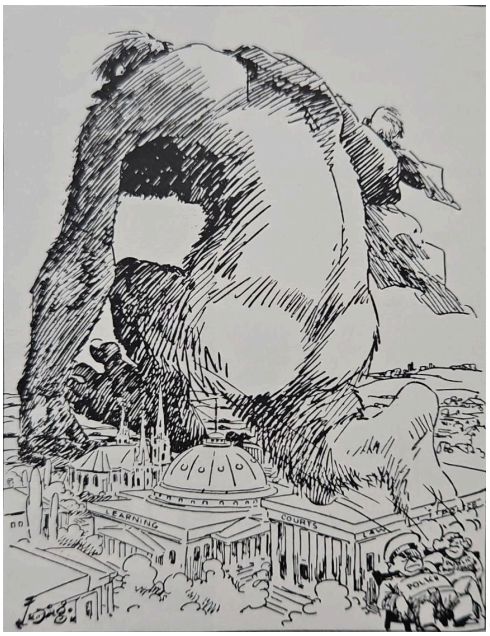
The citizen of Chicago, who was long haunted by the gangland shootings, must therefore lead his dog for a walk in a somewhat peculiar way.



(477)

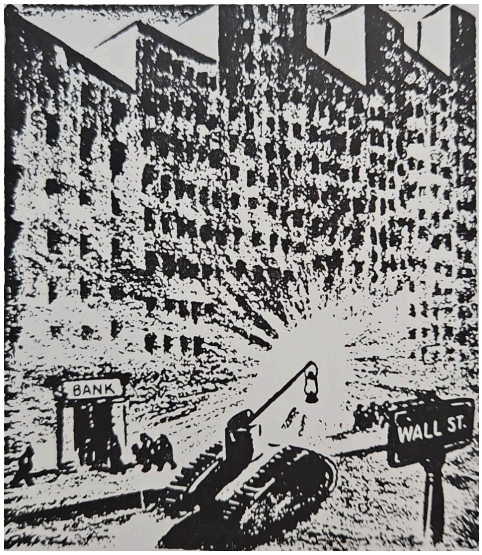
The monster of organized crime has become all-powerful – the fruit of civic carelessness.

Corruption in the USA

For many years, American political life also had the methods and face of gangsterism. Well into the 20th century, the principle of American politics was loot and plunder. Even towards the end of the 19th century, after an election, the entire bureaucracy, from the minister to the last clerk and postman, was replaced - for loot and plunder!

(478)

For a long time, the center of political corruption was Tammany Hall, the headquarters of the Democratic Party in New York. There, as in the Republican headquarters, the spoils were distributed. A "heavy hand" lay on New York.

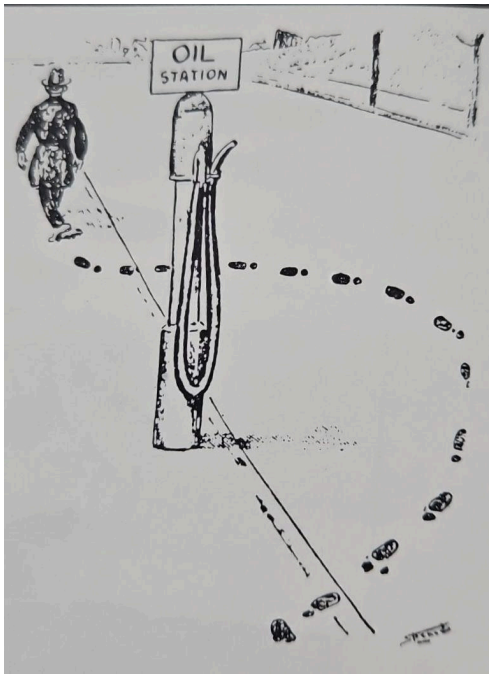


(479)

On Wall Street, the center of American finance, a new Diogenes is searching for a decent person.

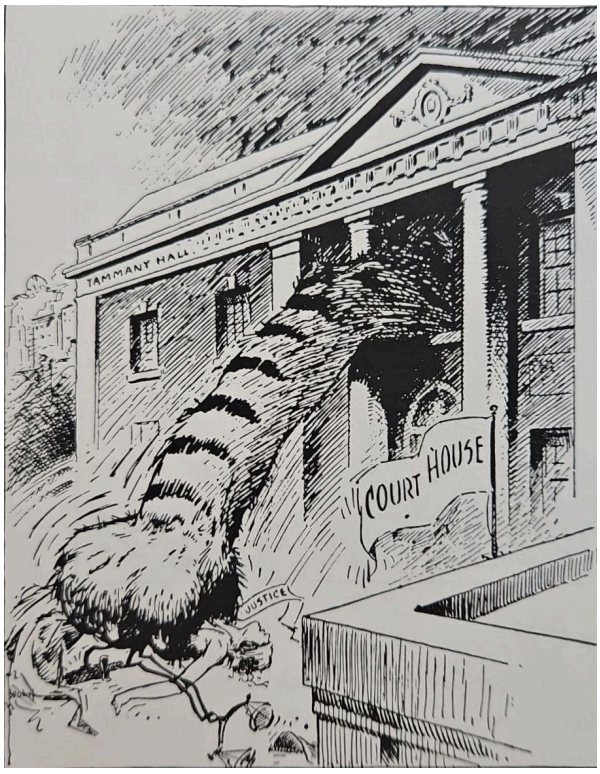
(480)

The big cities of America, which, according to a French sociologist, are all ruled by the mafia, have become the prey of predators: the "political gangs" of New York and Chicago, Tammany Hall and the plunderers of the state treasury.



(481)

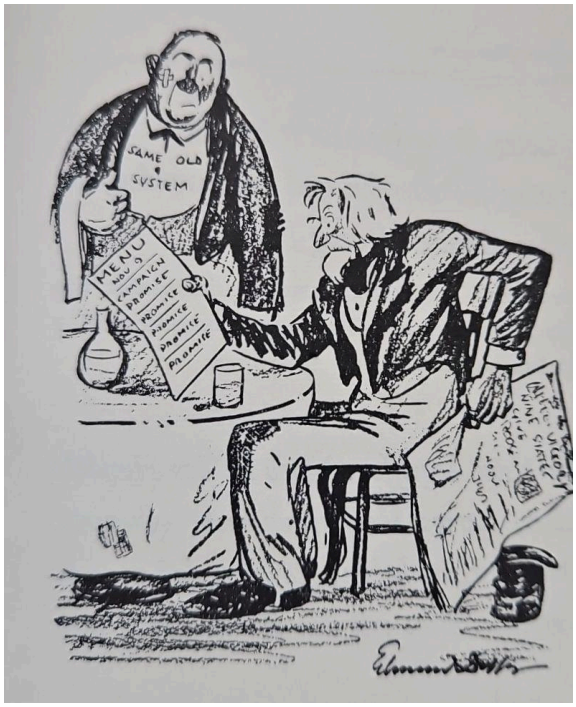
Oil has occasionally stained the reputation of American politicians; some of the worst scandals in US history have revolved around oil concessions. In these scandals, politicians have lost their good names by the dozen, so that now everyone with political ambitions avoids driving past a gas station.



(482)

The arm of the corrupting powers reached into the courtroom.

Upheaval in the USA?



(483)

There seemed to be little change in the political life of the USA. The morning after each election, with its flood of promises, the same old political menu was always on the table.

(484)

The USA seems to recognize only one "dictator" - the voter.

“The question now is whether the federal government of the United States has the necessary power that the national governments of other countries possess, namely, the right to create and enforce laws that relate to the social and economic problems of the nation as a whole.”

- **President Roosevelt on May 31, 1935, regarding the Supreme Court decision that annulled the National Recovery Act as an undue assumption of central government power and violation of the rights of the individual states.**

(485)

The USA is still in the throes of a massive political and social crisis; the actions of the nation state are still hampered by the rights of the individual states and old, rigid constitutional law, but those who have joyfully gathered behind the banners of the New Deal believe that the strong hands of the nation that want to move forward for the sake of progress cannot be tied with the threads of legal logic.

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Supplement

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